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# IN AID OF FAITH

BY

LYMAN ABBOTT.  
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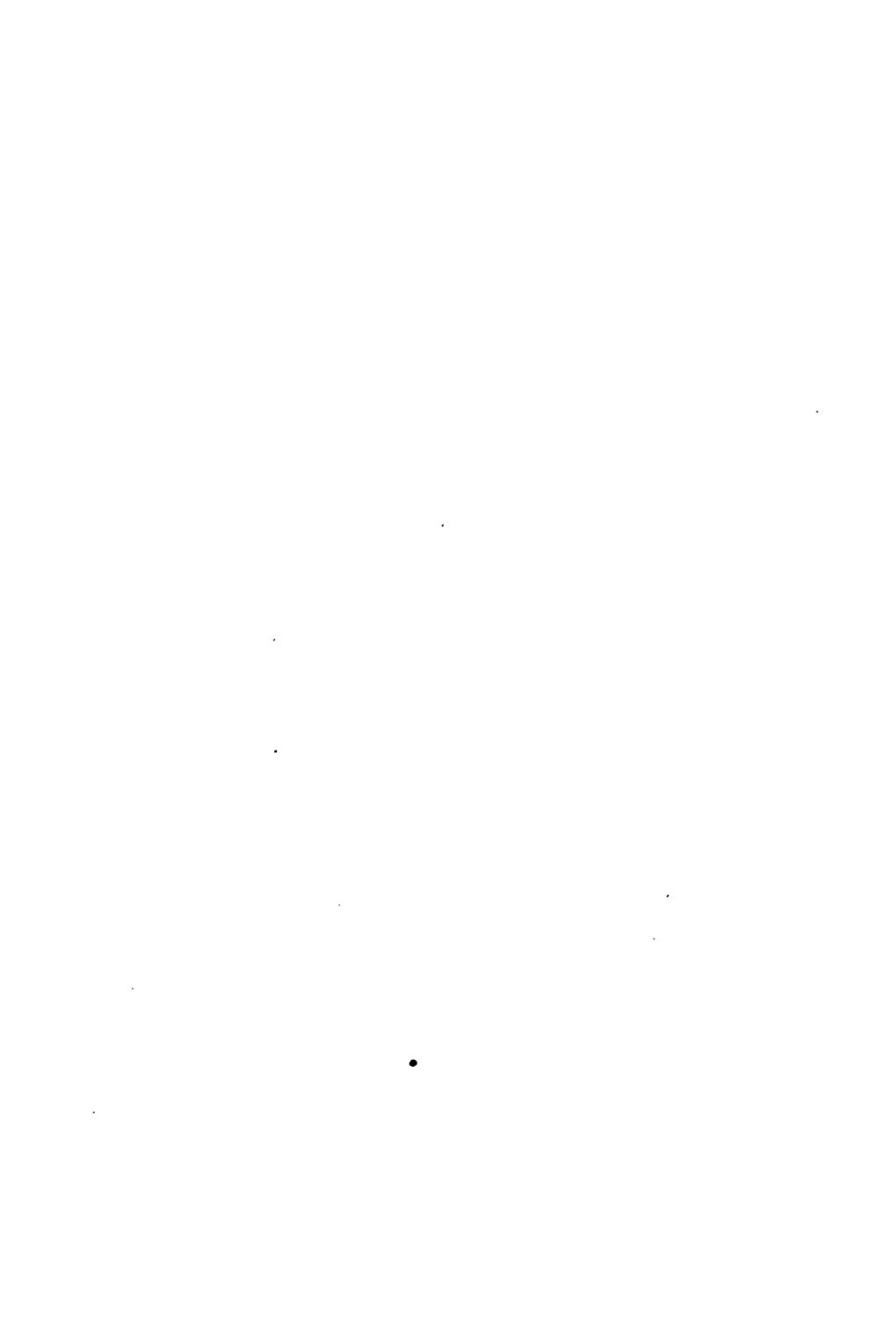
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## DEDICATION.

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TO THE FACULTY AND STUDENTS OF WELLESLEY COLLEGE  
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED,  
WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE PRESIDENT,  
ALICE E. FREEMAN, PH.D.

THEIR INTEREST IN SOME OF THE THOUGHTS EMBODIED IN THESE  
CHAPTERS, WHEN DELIVERED IN THE FORM OF  
A COURSE OF LECTURES IN THEIR COLLEGE CHAPEL,  
INDUCED ME TO PUBLISH THEM FOR A WIDER,  
THOUGH I CANNOT HOPE, FOR A MORE RESPONSIVE CIRCLE.



## PREFACE.

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THE title of this book indicates its purpose. It is written in order to give aid to those who desire to hold fast to their faith, but find intellectual and moral difficulties in so doing. There is a considerable class of persons in the community who have no conscious desire for spiritual life, who are very willing to be rid of the sanctions imposed by a belief in God and the future, who have no sense of sin and therefore no desire for pardon, no sense of unworthiness and therefore no desire for a diviner life, to whom the rejection of Christianity, with its hopes and its duties, brings no regret. This book is not addressed to such. It does not aim to make an unwilling convert; it does not seek to convince any one against his will, to wring a verdict by force of logic from a reluctant jury. I have little faith in polemical theology; little faith in the possibility of convincing any one of the truth of Christianity who sees nothing in it to desire; still less faith in any moral advantage in such conviction, even if it can be produced. Self-

satisfied sceptics will not read this volume, or if they attempt to do so, will find little in it.

There is also a considerable class of persons whose faith is not perplexed. The Christian religion presents no difficulties to them; the system of doctrine which they have inherited from their ancestors is adequate and satisfying; they are either ignorant of the course of modern thought, or they hold religious truth in one chamber of the mind and philosophic and scientific truth in another chamber of the mind, and never allow the two to come into collision. This somewhat curious mental state must, I think, be very common in those who hold to Roman Catholic theology. The intelligent Romanist knows that there is a difference between animal and vegetable substances; that the wafer, chemically analyzed before consecration, will present ocular demonstration of its vegetable nature; that if it is submitted to the same chemical analysis after consecration, the same ocular demonstration of its vegetable character will be afforded. Scientifically, he believes that the bread remains bread after consecration as before, yet religiously he believes that it is mysteriously changed and becomes the veritable body of the Saviour. I am not unaware of the answer which Roman Catholic theologians give to this difficulty when presented to them: but to most votaries of the Roman Catholic Church, bowing at the presentation of the host, it simply does not present itself at all. They find no difficulty in holding

scientifically one opinion and religiously another opinion, though the two are in direct conflict. In a somewhat similar manner there are doubtless many Protestants who read the first chapter of Genesis without feeling the least mental disturbance or questioning in consequence of the revelations of modern science. They read on the Sabbath the statement that "God made the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh;" they read in the week the scientific revelations of geology concerning the long, slow processes by which the world was evolved and brought into a habitable condition; and they find no difficulty in receiving and holding both views. They ask for no explanation, because they do not collate and compare their scientific opinion and their religious faith. So I have known Orthodox ministers who held firmly to the dogma of eternal punishment in its most distinct form, who believed—I do not say professed to believe, for I think their intellectual conviction was genuine and assured—that there is no opportunity to exercise a saving faith in Christ beyond this life, and no hope in the life to come for one who has not exercised such a saving faith in this life, and yet who found no moral or intellectual difficulty in speaking words of comfort and hope to heart-broken mothers when a child, grown to maturity, had died suddenly without any evidence whatever of evangelical repentance and faith. Such ministers are not to be charged with dishonesty; they

possess minds capable of holding two inconsistent views, one an intellectual and theoretical opinion, the other a practical and sympathetic sentiment, and they are not disturbed by the inconsistency. If that inconsistency is called to their attention, they invent or discover some sort of reconciliation; but unless it is called to their attention it gives them no concern. This book is not written for this class of persons. I have no desire to disturb a religious faith which is undisturbed. It may rest on false foundations: it may be alloyed with error. If so, there are enough forces at work in the community to shake it from its false foundations and to burn out its alloy—with the possible chance of burning up the gold also. This work of the destruction of falsehood—or false forms of truth, which are themselves the most dangerous kind of falsehood—I leave to others.

But there are also a great many persons in our time whose faith is perplexed. They are spiritually conscious of the life and truth obtained by their fathers from dogmatic systems, which they are no longer able to accept. They cannot believe what the preachers of their childhood taught them from the pulpit, and yet they cannot willingly surrender the life which grew up under that teaching. They cannot believe in the verbal infallibility of the Scriptures, with two versions of these Scriptures, possessing equal authority, before them; and yet they cannot surrender their faith in the Bible. They cannot believe in the scholastic concep-

tion of a God-man, who created bread as a God and ate it as a man: who taught as a God and was wearied as a man : who comforted his disciples as a God and sought their sympathetic prayers as a man : who rose from the dead as a God, after he had died upon the cross as a man : and yet they cannot surrender their faith in a divine Word of God, who translates the before unutterable divinity into communicable form and brings him into the life of man. Their moral nature revolts at the notion of an angry Deity, who demands for so much sin so much suffering, and lets the guilty escape only on condition that an innocent one will suffer ; and yet they cannot consent to abandon that inexplicable peace of mind which comes from a sense of sin not merely forgiven, but laid upon another and almost literally borne away into the darkness. This book is written to aid such minds. It is written for those whose spiritual nature craves spiritual truth, whose intellectual nature revolts against intellectual falsehood, and the harmony of whose nature is such that they must hold all spiritual truth in intellectual forms which are not irrational and self-contradictory. It is not so much an attempt to prove the truths of Christianity by logical processes as to state them in thinkable form. It is not an attempt to construct a new theology, still less is it polemically directed against an old theology : though in some cases, for the sake of greater distinctness, I have

contrasted the new statement with the old. It is an attempt to state the truth, which is involved in all theological systems which have ever taken strong hold upon human hearts in modern thought forms. It is not so much philosophical as it is personal. It is the record not so much of studies pursued in books, as of experiences wrought in my own spirit and in my own thinking. I cannot inherit truth : I have to acquire it. I have worked my own way through the forest to the light, only to find, generally, that I had followed, unconsciously, a path which others had blazed long before me. Some things which I once doubted are no longer doubtful : some things which were once traditional beliefs I have cast off as errors : but perhaps a still greater number of opinions have changed their form, retaining their substance, and have become in their new aspect profitable and vital convictions. In this book I have done little more than endeavor to tell those who are beset by similar difficulties the mental process by which I have cast off some old notions and some old doubts, and reached stronger and clearer convictions respecting certain fundamental truths of the Christian religion.

Spiritual truth can never be accurately stated in intellectual forms. It is vital, not philosophical ; and something is always lost in the attempt to translate it from the realm of experience into that of intellect. No moral philosophy can fathom a mother's love ; no

theological philosophy can fathom the Divine love. The experience of shame and humiliation in the consciousness of sin transcends all definitions of sinfulness; the experience of help and peace and joy in conscious fellowship with God transcends all definitions of redemption. All creeds are attempts to define the undefinable ; attempts to state what transcends all statement. Hence, while spiritual truth remains eternal, the dogmatic definitions necessarily change. If any one could have assumed to make a final interpretation of spiritual experience, surely it might have been the Apostle Paul : but it is Paul who says "We know in part and we prophesy in part." As Scripture remains the same in the Hebrew, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, Luther's Translation, the Authorized Version and the New Revision, so spiritual experience remains the same, whether the form of statement be that of Calvin's "Institutes" or Wesley's Sermons. As changes in language require new translations because of new verbal forms, so changes in intellectual conditions require new translations into new philosophical or dogmatic forms. It is my hope that the contents of this little book, because they are modern in their form, may be aids to faith for some who desire spiritually to hold fast to the faith once delivered to the saints, but who find it impossible honestly to hold fast to some of the dogmatic forms into which those saints have translated it, and who cannot sacrifice honesty

even to spiritual happiness ; and this hope is somewhat encouraged by the service which the lines of thought here developed seem to have rendered in a previous use, though in different form, in the pulpit, upon the lecture platform, and in the columns of the *Christian Union*.

LYMAN ABBOTT.

*Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, N. Y.*

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# IN AID OF FAITH.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE ALTERNATIVE CREED.

CHRISTIANITY is a philosophy, a history, and a life. All three phases of Christianity are illustrated by its most venerated and venerable symbol, the Apostles' Creed. The first paragraph is philosophic—"I believe in God the Father;" the second is historic—"and in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, who was born of the Virgin Mary;" the third is vital—"I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins." The first offers an interpretation of nature, the second of history, the third of human experience. Existence is a mystery. Schumann's "Warum?" does but musically interpret the questioning of every thoughtful heart: "Who am I? What am I for? How came I here? Under what law or lawgiver am I? What forces help to make and what to mar me? And what is my destiny?" To each of these questions Christianity has a definite answer ready. It replies: "You are a child of God; put here for char-

acter building; by your Father; under his authority; dependent on him for success; and with immortal, incorruptible, eternal life your true destiny." These questions are deep ones; they go to the very roots of life. These answers are sublime ones, too large to be easily accepted. For myself I cannot think of accepting them on the authority of any man or body of men, living or dead, past or present, speaking from the platform or from the tomb. They may help me to my conclusions; they cannot, must not, shall not form those conclusions for me.

But in considering these answers to these questions I naturally look to see what alternative is offered, what other answers are proposed. These are the answers of Christian faith; those of unbelief it is not so easy to ascertain. For belief is organized and has its creeds, while unbelief is inorganic and has none. There are no symbols of infidelity, and one must search through many an author, and for himself put together their various articles into one connected whole. When at times the profound mystery of existence again appalls me, and the tremendous positiveness of Christianity arouses anew all the old questioning, I recur to this creed of the creedless, and consider what alternative it offers. There are difficulties—great difficulties—in the Christian faith; the difficulties of unbelief seem to me, on a candid comparison, vastly greater.

Unbelief starts out with the assumptions, sometimes explicitly asserted, sometimes tacitly assumed, that all our knowledge is derived directly from our senses, or indirectly by logical processes and from the material furnished by the senses. They bring in the threads; the reason weaves them into a pattern; the web is knowledge. That there is any power which sees the invisible, any capacity for directly and immediately grasping the unseen world, it either openly scouts or quietly ignores. The benediction, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," Professor Clifford, for example, characterizes as "profoundly immoral," and declares that it would be impossible that it should be ascribed to a true prophet or a worthy leader of humanity, by "any man who clearly felt and recognized the duty of intellectual honesty, of carefully testing every belief before he received it, and especially before he recommended it to others."<sup>1</sup> Recognition of a spiritual sense, which directly and immediately perceives the invisible world, is not, so far as I know, characterized as "immoral" by any other prophet of unbelief, but it is passed by in silence as an antique superstition, or benignly smiled at as a childish fantasy.<sup>2</sup>

Starting with this assumption, unbelief begins its

<sup>1</sup> "Lectures and Essays," Vol. II., p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> I shall not attempt to give authorities for the statements in these pages, except when I quote *verbatim* from some author; they could easily be multiplied indefinitely, but would encumber the page with foot-notes.

quest of the universe for a God; the investigation is honest, earnest, sincere, protracted; the result is negative. There is no God to be seen; that is very clear—and perhaps some other hypothesis will do as well to account for all that is seen. On this point it is true the investigators are not agreed among themselves, for the sectarian differences are as great among skeptics as among Christians, though, since their convictions are not as vital, their strifes are not as bitter. The Deist thinks there probably is a God, but one who is by no means perfect in wisdom, power or benevolence; the Agnostic, that there is an invisible power behind visible nature, but it is the unknown and forever unknowable; the Positivist disowns even an unknown God and bids us substitute the worship of humanity; while the Atheist rejoices to see the Great King dethroned and man reclaimed from his greatest weakness, the superstition of worship and the restraints of divine law. "A Being of great but limited power, how or by what limited we cannot even conjecture: of great and perhaps unlimited intelligence, but perhaps even more narrowly limited than his power; who desires and pays some regard to the happiness of his creatures, but who seems to have other motives of action which he cares more for, and who can hardly be supposed to have created the universe for that purpose alone: such is the Deity whom Natural Religion points to, and any idea of God more captivating than this comes only

from human wishes or from the teaching of real or imaginary revelation."<sup>1</sup> This faith of the Deist goes too far for the Agnostic, who brings back from his quest only the assurance that "amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty that he is ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from whom all things proceed."<sup>2</sup> But some remnant of faith is allowed to participate in even this barren conclusion; and the Positivist advances a step beyond. He laughs at the unknowable, the everlasting naught, the Infinite and Eternal ( $X^n$ ) of his too credulous companions, and gives Man, spelt with a capital M, for our admiring reverence.<sup>3</sup> "The dim and shadowy outlines of the super-human deity," he tells us, "fade slowly away from before us, and as the mist of his presence floats aside we perceive with greater and greater clearness the shape of a still grander and nobler figure—of Him who made all Gods and shall unmake them. From the dim dawn of history, and from the inmost depth of soul, the face of our Father *Man* looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says, 'Before Jehovah was, I am.'"<sup>4</sup> But even this requires faith, for only a perception of the invisible can discover in man

<sup>1</sup> John Stuart Mill: "Three Essays on Religion," p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert Spencer, in "Nineteenth Century," Vol. XV., p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Frederic Harrison, in "Nineteenth Century," Vol. XV., p. 505.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Clifford, "The Ethics of Religion," "Fortnightly Review," July, 1877.

greatness or nobleness, or present from his history an object before which reverence can bow. And so we finally reach the culmination of this creed of the creedless in the repudiation of all reverence whatever for God or man, law or person, in the confession of this faith : " Religion, instead of a prerogative of human nature, appears as a weakness which adhered to mankind chiefly during a period of childhood, but which mankind must outgrow on attaining maturity."<sup>1</sup>

Two things, then, are clear to me. First, that there is no alternative between the Christian religion and no religion at all. These successive steps follow each other with an inexorable logic. I must accept substantially Mr. Mill's position that "any idea of God more captivating" than his imperfect Deity comes only from the teaching of either *real* or imaginary Revelation ; and if I agree with him in denying to man all capacity to know the invisible by direct spiritual perception, I must follow on to agree with Herbert Spencer that this imperfect Deity is unknown and unknowable, and with Frederic Harrison that an Infinite ( $X^n$ ) is not an object of intelligent worship. As little can I unite with him and Comte and Professor Clifford in the worship of *Man*. In vain I attempt to join this little band of unworshipping worshipers. My soul refuses to substitute for the "Our Father" of my childhood the adoration of Humanity.

Our brethren who are upon the earth, hallowed be

<sup>1</sup> Strauss, "The Old Faith and the New."

our name ; our kingdom come ; our will be done on earth ; for there is no heaven. We must get us this day our daily bread ; we neither forgive nor are forgiven, for Law knows no forgiveness ; we fear not temptation, for we deliver ourselves from evil ; for ours is the kingdom, and ours is the power, and there is no glory and no forever. Amen.

Can such a prayer as this satisfy me ? No ! I cannot utter it. The alternative is between a revealed religion and no religion at all ; between the Christian's faith in the Christian's God, and no faith, no God, no religion.

It is equally clear that this modern skepticism is not modern at all. It is ancient paganism—hardly in a new dress—only in a new name. “Mr. Spencer's ‘Energy,’ says Frederic Harrison, “has no analogy with God. It is Eternal, Infinite, and Incomprehensible ; but still it is not He, but it.” It ? Where have I seen this before ? I look back across the centuries, and, behold ! the modern faith in an Eternal It is but the echo of the paganism of the Persian poet of seven centuries ago.

“We are no other than a moving row  
Of magic Shadow shapes that come and go  
Round with this Sun-Illuméd Lantern held  
In Midnight by the Master of the Show.

“ Important Pieces of the Game He plays  
Upon this Checker-board of Nights and Days ;  
Hither and Thither moves and checks and slays,  
And one by one back in the closet lays.

"The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,  
But Right and Left as strikes the Player goes,  
And He that tossed you down into the Field  
He knows about it all—He knows—He knows,

"The Moving Finger writes ; and having writ  
Moves on ; Nor all your Piety and Toil  
Shall turn it back to cancel halfa line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

"And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,  
Whereunder crawling, cooped, we live and die,  
Lift not your hands to it for help—for *It*  
As impotently rolls as you or I."<sup>1</sup>

Frederic Harrison and Herbert Spencer do but repeat the pagan philosophy of Omar Khayyám, as he repeated that of Buddha and Confucius. The Eternal, Infinite, and Incomprehensible It is not a new Divinity. The alternative of the Christian creed is the creed of an ancient paganism risen from the dead. I say this not to cast obloquy upon it, but only for clearness' sake. The real alternative is between Christianity and paganism—nothing more, nothing less. This defines the issue.

In a second chapter I shall try to indicate what beyond this is involved in this alternative.

<sup>1</sup> Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE UNBELIEF OF UNBELIEVERS.

THE notion that all our knowledge is derived from the visible and tangible universe, and concerns only the seen and that which by our reason we derive from the seen—in one word, rationalism—not only gives us no basis for belief in a Father-God, it gives no basis for a high and hopeful life. For after we have searched the universe with our telescope and our spectroscope, and found no visible God, we search the human body with our scalpel and our microscope, and find no visible soul. We find muscles, and nerves and tissues, but neither thought, nor feeling, nor anything that thinks and feels. And so the same process that results in an Eternal, Infinite “It” in the universe results in a temporal and finite “it” in man. And the skeptic brings back from his research one of two conclusions: either that what we call thought and feeling are but the production of the nervous fluid, as electricity is the result of electric conditions, or heat an effect of the union of carbon and oxygen; or that man is but a succession of phantasmagoria, and thought and feeling are but drops in

an endless river in perpetual flow. "What we call the operations of the mind," says Huxley,<sup>1</sup> "are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity. Cabanis may have made use of crude and misleading phraseology when he said that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile; but the conception which that much-abused phrase embodies is, nevertheless, far more consistent with the fact than the popular notion that the mind is a metaphysical entity, seated in the head, but as independent of the brain as a telegraph operator is of his instrument." "The mind," says Hume, "is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance, pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no *simplicity* in it at one time, no *identity* in different times, whatever natural propensity we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented, or of the materials of which it is composed."<sup>2</sup> Thus according to the creed of the unbeliever, there is no I. I am not. There is only a mechanism which produces effects which I am pleased to call myself; or only a stage on which

<sup>1</sup> Huxley's "Hume," p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Huxley's "Hume," p. 166.

shadows come and go, banks between which an endless succession of separated drops flow in their inevitable course.

But if there is no I, if what seems to be personality is but a subtle product of nervous forces, or a conscious succession of separate experiences, there is and can be no immortality. There is nothing to be immortal. When the electrical machine is worn out, there are no more sparks ; when the wood is consumed and the last glowing embers have faded into ashes, there is no more fire. If what we call self is but a machine, then, when it has used up its vital forces, there is an end; if it is but "a kind of theatre," then, when the theatre is burned up, the play must stop. If life is to go on, some other machine must be constructed, some other theatre built. This is not a mere phantasy of the philosopher in his closet; it is the confession of a comfortless creed in time of sorrow. When grief stands looking into the tomb there is no angel there to say, "Why seek ye the living among the dead ? he is not here; he is risen." Unbelief has no purer and more unselfish apostle of its creedless creed than Felix Adler, of New York City. He attacks no man's brighter and happier faith; he seeks to rob no man of his hope in God and in the eternal future; he believes in men, and with a hopeless heroism he pushes on his philanthropic work for men. But when Dr. Damrosch dies, and the coffin lies before the vast audience which fills the Metropolitan Opera

House from floor to dome, and Felix Adler is called upon to speak to the solemn and sorrowing hearts in that vast assembly, this is all his message: "I have come to lay upon this bier three wreaths. The wreath of success: he had just grasped it when death paralyzed his arm, and it dropped from his helpless hand. I pick it up and lay it on his bier. The wreath of fame: his name we will cherish though he is gone; he is no more, but the memory of his honored life lives on. The wreath of an earthly immortality: we may not see his face again, but his influence survives him, and shall reproduce his spirit in our earthly lives." I condense into a sentence an oration faultless in its rhetoric; but I believe I have preserved all the essential consolation which it contained. And it is but a barren consolation beside the promise, "In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, that where I am there ye may be also;" or beside the triumphant welcome to a death no longer grim: "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

But if there is no I, no immortal part, nothing but physical mechanism, or an impersonal succession of events, there are and can be no great laws of right and wrong. Nothing is left but the expedient and

inexpedient, the pleasant and unpleasant, the wise and foolish, or at best the useful and the harmful. Certain things produce happiness, we will call them right; certain things produce unhappiness, we will call them wrong. But right as right and wrong as wrong, have disappeared, if we are logical must disappear, from our calculations. Garfield is only a good machine, and Guiteau a bad machine. The one we will put in the place of honor, like a valuable clock; the other we will put under ground, like a dangerous dynamite clock; but there is left no room for true commendation of the one, or real condemnation of the other. The skeptic who fights against this irresistible conclusion of his own skepticism can say nothing better than that "the first principle of natural ethics is the sole and supreme allegiance of conscience to the community."<sup>1</sup> The skeptic who, with poorer conscientiousness but better logic, follows the latter to its irresistible conclusion, casts away the laws of right and wrong altogether. "Were one," says Hume, "to go round the world with the intention of giving a good supper to the righteous and a sound drubbing to the wicked, he would frequently be embarrassed in his choice, and would find the merits and demerits of most men and women scarcely amount to the value of either."<sup>2</sup> The martyrs who have borne

<sup>1</sup> Professor Clifford: "Right and Wrong; the Scientific Ground of their Distinction," "Fortnightly Review," December, 1875.

<sup>2</sup> Huxley's "Hume," p. 175.

unflinchingly the fire and the rack, the heroes who marked the snows of Valley Forge with their bleeding feet, the later heroes whose graves our tears still keep green, the mothers whose unwearied devotion is the saving grace of weak and wayward childhood—the world's heroes and heroines, whom history honors, and nations celebrate in stone and poets in verse and dramatists in story, deserve not so much of us as a good supper: this is the last conclusion of that skepticism which begins by denying to man even a brute's capacity, and ends by denying to him more than a brute's virtue.

No God, or none that can be known, or worshiped or loved; no soul, nothing but a succession of experiences proceeding under an inevitable law; no immortality; nothing but a future influence as useless as our lives, since it proceeds from shadows, and only shadows are to be influenced by it; no eternal laws of right and wrong; no blame for guilt, or praise for patient, self-denying service; no religion, and no true, high, and hopeful life, for either the here or the hereafter—this is the creed of the creedless, the belief of unbelievers, for which we are asked to give up the faith and worship of our fathers. It is true that all unbelievers do not hold all the articles of this creed of unbelief. Perhaps very few do. But that is because they are not logical. He who accepts the premises—no power in me to perceive the invisible—cannot logically stop short of the conclusion: no God, no soul, no immortal future, no

right and wrong—for these are all invisible. When we have thrown faith away, logic can give us for a God only a hypothetical It ; for a conscious personality, a succession of phantasmagoria ; for a triumphant immortality, Nirvana ; and for Right and Wrong, eternal and immutable, a supreme allegiance of conscience (if there be a conscience) to the community. I look over the edge of a precipice. I see clinging to the barren rock, on the zigzag path that leads down the precipitous side, men and women seeking to find rest for their restless souls, but seeking in vain. Temporary footholds there are ; eternal and true resting-place is none between the top and the bottom ; between the full faith of the Christian in the Christian's Father-God, and the absolute negation of all faith, the sorrowful contentment of a mind which has emptied itself of all hope, and is at rest only because it has ceased to strive against a fate which is as inexorable as it is cruel. From below comes the sorrowful confession of hope stifled and love lost : "It cannot be doubted that theistic belief is a comfort and a solace to those who hold it, and that the loss of it is a very painful loss. It cannot be doubted, at least by many of us in this generation, who either profess it now, or received it in our childhood and have parted from it since, with such searching trouble as only cradle-faiths can cause. We have seen the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven, to light up a soulless earth ; we have felt with utter loneliness that the Great Compan-

ion is dead. Our children, it may be hoped, will know that sorrow only by the reflex light of a wondering compassion.”<sup>1</sup> From above comes the song of the soul, still walking in mystery, the mind oftentimes distraught, but the spirit at rest because with God :

“ I see a wrong that round me lies,  
I feel the guilt within ;  
I hear, with groan and travail cries,  
The world confess its sin.

“ Yet, in the maddening maze of things,  
And tossed by storm and flood,  
To one fixed stake my spirit clings:  
I know that God is good.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor Clifford: “ Influence upon Morality of a Decline in Religious Belief.” Lectures and Essays, Vol. II. p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> Whittier : “ The Eternal Goodness.”

## CHAPTER III.

### THE BASIS OF FAITH.

WITH the fundamental assumption of modern unbelief, that we know only the visible and the tangible, I take issue. Our deepest convictions are not arrived at by logical processes. The truths of which we are surest cannot be demonstrated. They are known. They are not proved; they are perceived. Indeed, I am inclined to go further; to assert that æsthetic truths are always æsthetically perceived, moral truths morally perceived, and spiritual truths spiritually perceived; that no truth is religious which depends upon a logical demonstration, that no truth has any moral quality unless it commends itself to the moral sense of moral men upon the bare presentation of it. It is a religious truth that it is wrong to steal, and no man is truly religious who does not instantly apprehend it without argument; but it is not a religious truth that God wrote the command, "Thou shalt not steal," on stone and gave it to Moses; that is a historical truth. A man may be very irreligious and believe it, or very religious and disbelieve it. So the belief that the

character and life of Jesus Christ as portrayed in the four Gospels has a divine quality in it is a religious truth ; and no man is or can be truly religious who does not perceive that divineness, and feel affections of love and reverence stirred within him by a study of that life and character. But the truth that such an one actually lived and suffered and died is a historical truth, depending upon historical evidence ; a man may be utterly irreligious and believe it, as innumerable instances in the community show, and a man might be profoundly religious and disbelieve it, though his disbelief would certainly indicate an extraordinary ignorance or an extraordinary lack of mental capacity.

It is as true that the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven is beautiful as it is that the sum of two sides of a triangle is always greater than the third side ; but the one truth is not conveyed to the mind by the same process which conveys the other. The geometrical truth is demonstrated ; the musical truth is perceived. If one doubts the geometrical proposition, if he will give you his attention, and he possesses any powers of reasoning, you can demonstrate it to him. If he doubts the musical proposition there is only one way to commend it to him ; he is lacking in musical perception, and must receive a musical education. Music is not an external fact ; it is an internal life produced by an external fact. It is not a vibration in the air, it is a pulsation of the

soul; and if the organ or the orchestra does not produce any pulsation in the soul there is nothing to be said, except that the nature is deficient. There is, as we say, no "ear for music;" we do not mean that there is no external organ, but no inward appreciation. Moral truths are in the same category. They are not demonstrated. Right and wrong are ultimate facts. If the utilitarian tells me that is right which produces the greatest happiness of the greatest number, I ask him why it is any better or more right to produce happiness than to produce misery, and we are as far from the solution of the problem as before. There is no answer to the question but Faber's:

"And right is right, since God is God,  
And right the day must win.  
To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin."

We do not believe that truth, justice, purity, love, are right, and their opposites—falsehood, cruelty, sensuality, and selfishness—are wrong, because from a broad deduction we have come to the scientific conclusion that the one produce desirable and the other undesirable effects. If lying produced happiness it would still be lying; and when sensuality produces pleasure, it still remains sensuality. The man who argues for excess is not to be argued with; he must be either coerced or morally convicted. The man who scoffs at honesty cannot be set right by de-

bate ; we simply keep our hand on our pocket-book till we are out of his presence. A singular and eloquent statement of this truth is given by Mr. Huxley ; singular, because it is in striking contrast with all that precedes in the volume. In his sketch of Hume<sup>1</sup> he has followed his master and swept away, somewhat cavalierly, all faith in God, in immortality, and even in a personal and spiritual existence, because there is no adequate evidence in visible phenomena to demonstrate these faiths ; but when Hume goes on, applying the same process of reasoning to moral distinctions, and belittling, if he does not absolutely deny, the real and immutable difference between right and wrong, Huxley recoils, and thus defines the basis of moral belief :

" In whatever way we look at the matter, morality is based on feeling, not on reason ; though reason alone is competent to trace out the effect of our actions, and thereby dictate conduct. Justice is included in the love of one's neighbor ; and goodness is a kind of beauty. The moral law, like the law of physical nature, rests in the long run upon instinctive intuitions, and is neither more nor less ' innate ' and ' necessary ' than they are. Some people cannot by any means be got to understand the first book of Euclid ; but the great truths of mathematics are no less necessary and binding on the great mass of mankind. Some there are who cannot feel the difference

<sup>1</sup> Huxley's "Hume :" English Men of Letters. (Harper & Brothers.)

between the *Sonata Apassionata* and *Cherry Ripe*; or between a gravestone cutter's cherub and the Apollo Belvedere; but the canons of art are none the less acknowledged. While some there may be, who, devoid of sympathy, are incapable of a sense of duty; but neither does their existence affect the foundation of morality. Such pathological deviations from true manhood are merely the halt, the lame, and the blind of the world of consciousness; and the anatomist of the mind leaves them aside, as the anatomist of the body would ignore abnormal specimens."

The Christian believer will notice as a curious and suggestive circumstance that Mr. Huxley, in speaking of the morally incapable, uses almost the very terms which the New Testament uses in characterizing the spiritually incapable, whom it describes as the lame, the halt, the blind, and the dead. For, according to the New Testament, spiritual truth rests upon the same foundation as aesthetic and ethical truth. Yes, goodness is a kind of beauty; and if one cannot see that beauty in Christ it is because he is among the blind of the world of consciousness. The prophet Isaiah laments this blindness in the people of Israel: "There is no beauty in him that we should desire him;" and Christ himself, about to depart, and promising his disciples another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, adds: "Whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not [he is

not capable of visible demonstration], neither knoweth him [the world is not capable of spiritually perceiving him]: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you."

In all higher realms life is the basis of knowledge. We believe because we are. Only the man with a soul of music perceives musical truth: only a man with a soul of art perceives artistic truth; only a man with a soul of goodness perceives truths of goodness; and only a man with a spiritually developed nature perceives spiritual truths. The basis of belief is within us, not without; and the truths are known instantly when they are presented to us. They are not laboriously arrived at by processes of argumentation. I can easily find arguments outside myself to buttress my religious faith, and I sometimes need them. I can easily find evidences outside myself to test my religious convictions, and I often need to apply them, lest I mistake my inclination for my judgment, and my educated habits for my spiritual intuitions. But when I ask myself what is the real basis of my religious belief in God, in immortality, in Christ, in the Bible, I find that basis is my own consciousness, receiving and responding to the invisible truth: and when I begin to ask what is the real basis of that belief in the great body of Christians, most of whom have neither the education, the time nor the books for independent philosophical investigation, I see that this same inward witness is the one which attests to them the truth,

which they are often, for that reason, puzzled to attest to others. A French deist argues with a Christian friend at considerable length against immortality. The friend replies in a sentence : " Probably you are right. I presume you are not immortal ; but I AM." He has expressed in that sentence the foundation of my faith in my own immortality. Immortality is in a true sense a present fact. I *am* immortal now ; not merely shall be ; though the shall be is projected into the future necessarily out of the I am. The immortal nature is within ; and I feel its strivings, as the unfledged bird the growing power of flight before he spreads his wings and launches from his nest upon the invisible and untried element on which without a fear he trusts himself. I study the life and character of Christ as portrayed in the four Gospels. Its divineness grows upon me as I study ; not only no other life to be compared to it, but no ideal conception of life which I can form but fades before the brighter glory of this reality. If my neighbor does not see, feel, recognize, know, the divineness in the picture, I can as little prove to him that he is wrong and I am right, as I can prove the beauty of a primrose to poor Peter Bell, or the motherhood in Raphael's cartoon to the friend at my side, to whom it seems but a painted commonplace. If motherhood does not look out of those divine eyes into his there is no more to be said ; I can neither see for him nor make him see. My atheistic friend asks me, Why do you believe in God ? What

can I answer him but by asking him another question : Why do you believe in your mother ? "I have seen my mother." I beg pardon. You have never seen your mother. You have seen the eyes, the ears, the brow, the mouth ; but they are not mother. Else why, when the form is prostrate, and you look in vain into the eyes that never before failed to look love back again, and press your lips upon the lips that never before failed to answer kiss with kiss, do you cry for "Mother ! mother !" in a despairing endeavor to bring her back to you ? What you see and touch is not what you love. No ! It is the patience of love that nursed, and tended, and watched, and feared, and hoped, that is mother, and that no eye ever saw nor hand ever touched. But no mother ever gave clearer counsel to her child, or greater strength, or sweeter comfort, or purer, deeper inspiration than the invisible Father bestows upon his children in the hour of their need. The witness of childhood to the presence and power of mother-love is not more uniform nor more songful than the testimony of God's children singing through the centuries : "He restoreth my soul ; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake ; yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." The basis of belief is the same in both cases ; it is the basis of experience.

If any one imagines that I am declining or evading the demand that the Christian show a reasonable ground for the hope that is in him, and am substituting an appeal to the sentiments and emotions, he entirely misapprehends my meaning. The emotions cannot be excited without some object to excite them. The soul cannot love, admire, reverence, without some object, real or imaginary, for its love, its admiration, its reverence. It must have either a perception or a conception. The existence of homes is itself a continuous and perpetual testimony to the reality of something in man more than the material organization. The existence of worship is in like and equal measure a continuous and perpetual testimony to something in this universe more than nature. If an unhappy human waif cynically declares that there is no love in life, though he has no experience of love, yet he might be appealed to, to consider the wealth of domestic affection, and to reflect on the mere phenomena of domesticity, as a demonstration that man is something more than a manikin, and wife and mother something more than a marble or a canvas counterfeit of womanhood. And so, if he declares that there is no truth in faith, no reality in worship, he may be appealed to, though he has no experience of either, to recognize as a philosopher some real cause for the phenomena of faith and worship, and to see in this substantially universal experience of human hearts a witness to the reality of a personal God whom oth-

ers, more happily endowed, or more wisely educated, or more truly receptive and unprejudiced than himself, perceive by spiritual apprehension. The evidence of the real personality of and the loveliness in God is precisely the same in kind, and quite as great in degree, as the evidence of the true personality of and the loveliness in man.

If one say, with John Stuart Mill, that he has no such spiritual perception, and therefore declines to accept it as a witness of spiritual verities,<sup>1</sup> I can only answer, in the words of Huxley, that such as he are merely "the halt, the lame, and the blind of the world of consciousness; and the anatomist of the mind leaves them aside, as the anatomist of the body would ignore abnormal specimens." For this religious instinct is not a peculiar gift of peculiar prophets or a peculiar race. It was more highly developed among the Hebrews than among any other ancient people; but it was no more their monopoly than art was a monopoly with Greece, or law with Rome. It

<sup>1</sup> "When no claim is set up to any peculiar gift, but we are told that all of us are capable as the prophet of seeing what he sees, feeling what he feels, nay, that we actually do so, and when the utmost effort of which we are capable fails to make us aware of what we are told we perceive, this supposed universal faculty of intuition is but

" 'The dark-lantern of the spirit,  
Which none see but those who bear it!'

and the bearers may fairly be asked to consider whether it is not more likely that they are mistaken as to the origin of the impressions in their minds, than that others are ignorant of the very existence of an impression in theirs."

was richly manifested in Isaiah, Paul, Augustine, Wesley: but Isaiah, Paul, Augustine, Wesley, would have had no power among their fellows if there had not been the same capacity in smaller measure in the audiences to whom they spoke, and the readers to whom they still speak. The religious perception is far more common than art perception; the capacity to know, honor, and love God is far more widely found than the capacity to appreciate music. Indeed, it would be quite within bounds to say that in the world of humanity those who have no apparent power to perceive the invisible divine, and no spontaneous impulse to reverence it, are fewer in number than those who lack the organs of sight and hearing, and that the testimony<sup>\*</sup> to the reality of a God, directly and immediately though spiritually perceived, is quite as uniform as the testimony to the reality of a physical world by the senses of sight and hearing.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

If any metaphysician should chance to read these pages—a very unlikely contingency—he will criticise this use of the word “consciousness.” It is therefore proper to say that I use it in a popular, not a scholastic, sense, because there is no better word at hand to express to unscholastic readers my meaning. I use it to express the mental phenomena within us, contrasted with the natural phenomena without, as in the phrase “the world of consciousness.” The storyteller says: “I suddenly awakened with the consciousness of some one in my room,” meaning with an inward sense of a presence the evidence of which was so subtle that it eluded any analysis. Our religious faith rests on consciousness, on an inward sense. This is not, however, equivalent to saying that the basis of our religious belief is different from the basis of any other belief. On the contrary, it is identical. All our beliefs rest on our consciousness, or, if the metaphysician prefers, on our experience. The only difference, if difference there be, between our religious and our scientific belief is that our religious be-

lief rests somewhat more immediately and directly thereon.

We *know* only what takes place within us; we *conclude* what takes place without us. All knowledge of phenomena outside ourselves is deduced from phenomena within ourselves. I am writing this paragraph on a piece of white paper, resting on a library table. How do I know this? Because a picture of the white paper and the library table is produced on the retina of the eye, and conveyed by the optic nerve to the brain, and so to the mind, and because an impression of hardness in the paper and the table is produced upon the hands and arms, and conveyed by their nerves to the brain, and so to the mind. If the nerves were cut there would be no impression of hardness; if the retina were destroyed there would be no impression of whiteness. I *know* positively and absolutely that such an impression is produced within me; I am, in popular phrase, conscious of it. I *conclude* that certain external things, namely, white paper and a table, have produced them. The latest hypothesis, possibly I should say conceit, of physical science is that all matter is only a form of force. The cyclone cuts its way through the forest as though it were a scythe: it is nothing but impalpable air in rapid motion. And it is now suggested that what we call matter is only impalpable and infinitesimal particles in rapid motion, a series of infinitely minute and rapid vortices, a combination of infinitesimal

whirlwinds. Whether this is anything more than a conceit or not it is immaterial now and here to inquire; true or false, it equally well illustrates the truth that scientific men recognize the fact that external phenomena may be something very different from what they seem; that while our consciousness in reporting to us impressions of color and of density is not at fault, our deductions respecting the nature of the external objects which produce those impressions may be entirely at fault. A simpler illustration may perhaps serve better. You say, "I see stars." What do you mean? You may have looked up into the heavens on a winter's night and seen its stellar glory; you may have fallen on the ice and struck the back of your head. In either case you "see stars." The interior experiences are analogous, though the external phenomena are not; in the one case you conclude luminaries are over your head, in the other case ice beneath your feet.

Thus all our knowledge, historical, geographical, scientific, rests in the last analysis on consciousness—our own or that of others accepted by us. We believe that our inward experiences have truthfully reported and correctly interpreted to us the outward world. It is true that the report is not always accurate, nor the interpretation always correct. The brain sometimes plays pranks with us. We are subject to illusions. In vivid dreams, in insanity, in delirium, the mind is conscious of persons and events

which have no outward reality. In ordinary life, if the phenomenon is unusual, we require a second observation, or we test one sense by calling in another sense to confirm or contradict it, or we appeal to another witness to see whether his brain makes the same report and gives the same interpretation. But the general testimony of consciousness is accepted as trustworthy ; we believe its reports, and act upon them. We assume that its testimony within of objects without is truthful, and we habitually and unhesitatingly accept and act upon it. If it is a habitual liar we can know almost nothing ; for all our knowledge assumes that truth is the law and illusion the exception.

Now, we are conscious of an invisible world within us, just as we are conscious of a visible world without us. The testimony to the one is as uniform as the testimony to the other. No amount of subtle reasoning can satisfy the practical man that life is an illusion, a dream, a false show, and that there is no visible, physical universe, only a delusive impression of one. As little can any amount of skeptical subtlety convince the practical man that there is no reality in the invisible universe, in the world of thought and sentiment, in moral principle and human affection. He is conscious of the one as of the other; *as* conscious of the one as of the other ; *as uniformly* conscious of the one as of the other. He does not more clearly see the form of wife and mother than he feels the in-

visible pulsations of a wife's and a mother's love. Belief in both cases is produced by a consciousness within him ; he concludes, by a deduction which it is equally impossible either to analyze or to defy, that this consciousness is produced by phenomena—phenomena in the one case physical, in the other case spiritual. On the truthfulness of consciousness as reporter and interpreter of material phenomena all science depends; on its truthfulness as reporter and interpreter of spiritual phenomena all government, commerce, society, domesticity, in a word, all that we call *life*, depends. If it be not true witness, if, taking its testimony in the aggregate, we cannot act upon it with confidence, there is an end to all living and all thinking, and we are mere molecules, bound together neither in social organism by spiritual laws, nor even in physical organism by material laws. The anarchy in the one case is as inevitable and absolute as in the other.

Now, our religious belief rests on the testimony of this same witness. As the consciousness of the outward is not more universal than that of the inward, so the testimony to the reality of human love and life is not more uniform than the testimony to a Divine Spirit in whom we live and move and have our being. Atheists there are, misanthropes there are ; but not more of the one than of the other. On the whole, there are probably fewer men in the world who disbelieve in God than who disbelieve in man. God

is not an hypothesis, like the ether, invented to account for phenomena. He is a reality ; rather let me say he is the Eternal and Immutable Reality, and we know him directly and immediately. Carlyle is scouting as an unbeliever. He seems to me to have followed his spiritual instincts but a little way, and then halted. But Carlyle has borne characteristic testimony to the truth I am trying here to express, that God is not an hypothesis, but a fact, whom we know by an invisible sense as directly and immediately as we know any fact of nature or of life.

" But above all things *proof* of a God ? A *probable* God ! The smallest of finites struggling to *prove* to itself : that is to say, if we will consider it, to picture out and arrange within itself, and include within itself, the Highest Infinite, in which by hypothesis it lives and moves and has its being ! This we conjecture will one day seem a much more miraculous miracle than that negative result it has arrived at, or any other result a still surer choice might lead it to. He who in some singular Time of the World's History was reduced to wander about, in stooping posture, with painfully constructed sulphur match and failing rushlight (as Gowkthrapple Naigeon), or smoky tar-link (as Denis Diderot), searching for the Sun, and did not find it ; were *he* wonderful and his failure ; or the singular Time and its having put him on that search ?" <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle's Miscellanies : Diderot. Chapman's and Hall's Edition, page 290.

Consider, too, what I have already suggested, that a Christian's faith rests on the concurrent consciousness of many witnesses. If here and there is a man who cannot find the sun by looking for it with his petty rushlight, the great majority of mankind live in its light, and become conscious of its presence whenever they turn their thoughts toward it.

A number of years ago I was awakened suddenly at night by feeling a hand upon my throat, and another under my pillow groping for my watch. I struggled to arise, but could not; to cry out, but the tightened grasp upon my throat suffocated me. Then the hand was as suddenly withdrawn. I sprang from my bed, rushed into the adjoining room, tried every door, looked into both closets, examined the windows and came back to find my wife laughing at me. I had had a nightmare. But if, while I felt the hand on my throat, she had seen the form of a robber, or felt his hand beneath her pillow, it would have been difficult to convince me that it was a dream. Two persons do not dream the same dream at the same time. Yet that might possibly occur. We might have eaten the same indigestible supper, and listened to the same suggestively alarming story. It is even conceivable that a score of witnesses should, by a kind of contagion, fall into the same snare, and see the same vision. But the testimony of Christian consciousness has been witnessed through eighteen centuries by men and women of different language, race, creeds, and rituals,

in Protestant and Catholic communion, in first century and in nineteenth century, in Latin and in Anglo-Saxon race, in mediæval and in modern civilization, in the man of letters and in the peasant, in the learned Augustine and the ignorant tinker, always and everywhere essentially the same. Expressing itself, as we should expect, in a great variety of forms, explained, as we should expect, by a very variable philosophy, with kaleidoscopic worship and kaleidoscopic creeds, the heart of humanity still bears one unvarying testimony to the power of a divine life, to the presence of an Infinite Spirit, to the peace of a God-given pardon, and to victory over sorrow and over sin. If Christianity is a dream, the soul has dreamed it alike in the monastic cell and the crowded thoroughfare, in the vast cathedral and the Puritan meeting-house, in the splendor of the court and the torture of the flame. This life of the soul is more universal than science, literature, or art; stronger than appetite, passion, or pride; and more enduring than death.

If any one says that this appeal to consciousness proves too much, that it proves alike the truth of the Calvinistic and the Arminian theology, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic faith, the religion of Jesus and the religion of Buddha, since all alike appeal to the consciousness of their votaries, I reply, in so far as they do appeal to the consciousness of their votaries, and in so far as that consciousness responds, the religion is true. Human consciousness is a true witness; its

testimony, when confirmed by that of many men and women, cannot be denied without denying the foundation of all knowledge, and leaving us in chaos, without moral, intellectual, or even physical order. The Roman Catholic devotee who prays with streaming eyes to the Virgin and rises comforted, is comforted; for God with wiser because broader love than ours, sees in the soul which looks through womanhood to him, a spirit of faith that can, and therefore must, receive divine consolation. The soul that cries reverently to Buddha, seeking rest, and goes away strengthened to bear the burden which is not taken away, has received strength; for God does not punish his children with his disfavor because they spell his name amiss. I shall hope to show hereafter that there is a testimony in Christian consciousness which has no parallel, and scarcely even an analogy, in that of any other religious faith. But such as it is it is a true testimony. For God's loving-kindness is over all his works: and the paganism which gropes after God, if haply it may find him, does find him, as Paul told the Athenians. It was not to Christian believers, but to pagan searchers, that he said, "In him we live and move and have our being;" and it was not a Hebrew prophet, but a pagan poet, he cited as a witness to the truth that we are all his offspring.

There is many an article in our modern creeds which mediæval scholasticism has woven into them, and modern thought is taking out again. But the

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great facts of spiritual life—immortality, God, divine inspiration, and the forgiveness of sins—can only be denied by one who has never considered the testimony of consciousness, or who, in denying its truthfulness, denies the veracity of that witness on whom all our knowledge and all our life depends.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE INFINITE POWER.

SOME years ago, while on a visit to the island of Mackinaw, in company with a few friends, I sailed across the straits, and landed on the northern shore of the State of Michigan. We there disembarked, and, following a half-overgrown wood-road for a couple of miles, under the leadership of one of the party, came upon a village of considerable size. There was a hotel, a large saw-mill, a store, and perhaps a score of cottages. But there not a man, woman, child, dog, cat, or mouse to be seen. It was absolutely without a sign of life. A capitalist had conceived the idea of sawing the lumber there in the forest and transporting the boards to the market by the lake, but his enterprise had failed. We did not, however, need to be told this story to give us absolute assurance that man had been there before us. The evidence of his handiwork was all-sufficient. Analogous remains of human handiwork are often come upon by the scientist in his explorations, and he always draws the same conclusion; he never entertains for a moment the suggestion that they

happened, or were evolved. He finds beneath the waters of the Swiss lakes the remains of ruined piers, and draws a picture of prehistoric lake-dwellers; on the face of Colorado cliffs human habitations, and portrays the character of the prehistoric cliff-dwellers; in the mounds of the West remains of a civilization preceding that of the North American Indians, and is sure that such a civilization existed, though there is neither history nor tradition of it; arrow-headed flints in great numbers in gravel quarries in France, and unhesitatingly concludes the existence of a savage manufactory antedating all history, written or legendary. This conclusion is never questioned by any scientist. I believe that some theologians, anxious to demonstrate that the world of man is not more ancient than Archbishop Usher's chronology in the margin of our Bibles would make it, did once suggest that God might have made the arrow-heads, though why, unless as a sort of practical joke on his children, is not suggested; but this hypothesis has never found acceptance in either theological or scientific circles; and no one has ever ventured to intimate that no one made them.

The scientific argument for the existence of a God is precisely that for the existence of prehistoric man. It is that implied in the answer of the French Christian to his atheistical companion who admired the cuckoo clock upon the mantel, and asked, "Who made it?" "Nobody," replied the Christian; "it

happened." This argument, which antedates Aristotle, has grown no weaker with age and use. Since the death of Ernst Haeckel it is doubtful whether there is left an avowed atheist among thinking and scholarly men. Agnostics plenty, Positivists some, but atheists? No! The scientifically skeptical world with substantial unanimity accepts the conclusion which Herbert Spencer has recently formulated as the theistic creed of the scientist: "Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that he is ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from whom all things proceed." In what respects has modern science modified this conclusion or the argument which conducts to it?

1. The ancient Hebrew conceived of the world as a flat plain of moderate extent, inclosed under a blue dome or vault, lighted by a series of revolving lights, and curtained by clouds. What an American would call a pond, thirteen miles long by three or four wide, he called the *Sea* of Galilee; what an American would call a hill a few hundred feet high, he called *Mount* Carmel; the Mediterranean was to him the *Great Sea*; and the little province of Palestine, about as large as our state of Vermont, was to him *The Land*, or sometimes *The Earth*. His conception of the Creator was unavoidably commensurate with his conception of the creation. He thought

that the Creator dwelt in a tent or a temple, and all the reiterated assertions of his prophets could not inspire him with a larger idea. He was more than half inclined to believe with the heathen that his God was a god of the hills, and could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, who, with their chariots of iron, were too strong for his little deity.<sup>1</sup> When the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant, the box that stood in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle, they believed that they had captured Jehovah in this box, and the Israelites were more than half inclined to be of the same opinion. With this belittled idea of God idolatry was inevitable; a picture or a statue served very well to embody all the little conception such a people had of the invisible power which animates nature; nor could they understand why this help to imagination should be denied them, since they could not understand how feeble and degrading was that imagination.

To all this, science has forever put an end. We know to-day that this world is not the center of the universe, but a grain of sand on the shore of infinity, and one of the smallest of its sand-grains. We know that the heavens are no dome, but illimitable space; and their stellar glory not torches set to illuminate the earth, but stars and systems of stars whose magnitude surpasses alike the power of the mathematician and the imagination of the poet. The light reaches us

<sup>1</sup> Judges i. 19.

from the sun, ninety-five million miles away, in eight seconds. But there are stars in sight so distant that if an observer were stationed on one with a telescope sufficiently powerful to enable him to see what is transpiring on this planet, he would see not the nineteenth century, but the first, with its decaying Greek and Roman civilization, and the first dawn of its Christian light shining from the stable of Bethlehem; stars so distant that such an observer would see Abraham coming out of the land of paganism, the world's first pilgrim for conscience' sake, to lay in Judaism the foundation for the world's first religion; stars so distant that as he looked he would see the nebulous matter of the future earth solidify into rock, and the first reflected light of a new-created world would strike upon his vision.

Moreover, we know to-day that the same Power from whom all things proceed is manifest alike in that world and in ours, and in all the inter-stellar spaces, binding star to star, as molecule to molecule. Frederic Harrison, criticising Mr. Spencer's deistic belief, says that he would prefer to say, "Some power or powers;" but in this criticism Mr. Harrison is certainly unscientific and behind the age. It is not strange that paganism believed in gods many and lords many. For to the superficial observer nature seemed a prey of various and conflicting forces. Thus not only was each vital force deified, but each locality was given over to the control of a provincial

deity. The Syrians, defeated in the hill country by the Hebrews, proposed to fight them on the plains, for, said they, "their gods are the gods of the hills." Of one God over all and in all there is small trace in any ancient religion, as of one Power over all and in all there is small trace in any ancient science. But the same process which has demonstrated the illimitable extent has demonstrated the unity of that Infinite and Eternal Power from whom all things proceed. Astronomy has proved that the same force binds the planets together that draws the apple from the bough; the spectroscope has shown that the chemical forces in the sun are the same that operate in the fire on the hearth; and the law of the correlation of forces has clearly indicated that they are all but different manifestations of one and the same great Force. The Infinite and Eternal Power from which all things proceed is *one*, not many. If it were possible to heap all our churches, all our Bibles, and all our books of theology in one vast funereal pyre, and put all ministers and religious teachers upon the top of the vast pile, and burn them all up together, it would still be inconceivable that humanity should go back to either idolatry or polytheism, unless all that science has taught were also destroyed in the vast conflagration.

2. Science has also at once illustrated and demonstrated the æsthetic and beneficent qualities in this Power. Among the "all things" which proceed

therefrom are all things of beauty. There is no color that charms us on the painter's canvas that was not before produced upon the flower or the cloud, with a sunbeam for a brush. There is no form of artistic beauty which does not mirror some superior beauty in life; no Madonna of Raphael which equals the living models from which he studied. All architectural forms have their originals in nature; the Doric columns of the forest, and the delicate tracery of the Gothic cathedrals in the more exquisite spires and buttresses of the mountain peaks.<sup>1</sup> There is far less in the cathedral of Milan to indicate a beauty in design than in the Alps or Apennines; less in Church's marvellous picture of Niagara than in the original which it faintly though beautifully indicates.

Science, too, while it leaves much still uncomprehended in what we call nature's operations, has explained much that was once dark, and shown beneficence where there seemed of old time only wrath and bitterness, or idle waste. The ocean is no longer a waste of waters; it is the great reservoir which supplies our earth with its circumambient atmosphere; its very storms preserve from the stagnation which brings death; its currents bring benedictions with them. The Gulf Stream carries summer in its bosom

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin has indicated in a wonderful eloquent paragraph the inspiration which all true architects have derived from nature, and the adaptation of each true architecture to its own natural environment. "Studies of Venice," chapter vi.; "The Nature of the Gothic," section viii.

from the Caribbean Sea to the western coast of Europe, makes habitable the British Isles, and drops from its opened palm upon the shores of France and Spain the peach, the apricot, and the grape. The great desert of Sahara proves to be the furnace from which the hot air sweeps with summer in its wings to redeem the continent of Europe from the inevitable barrenness of what would otherwise be an always wintry clime. The spired and buttressed Alps, which beat back into the valley the singing birds, and forbid the trespass of the flowers up their steep and snowy sides, hold on their brows the congealed treasures of rain till the time of need has come, when the south wind loosens them, catches them in its arms, and flies all over Northern Europe, dropping them in the farmer's opened furrows. The cyclone sweeps away a more deadly malaria, and leaves life and health in the land it has seemed to devastate with fury. The very earthquakes and volcanoes prove themselves to be safety-valves whose destructiveness suffices to indicate what terrific fate would overtake the home of man if no such vents had been provided.<sup>1</sup>

3. I am not unaware that certain modern thinkers imagine that evolution weakens, if it does not destroy the argument for the existence of a designer from the evidence of design in creation, and regard the Infinite

<sup>1</sup> See, for a fuller exposition of the difference in our estimate of the value of things in nature supposed heretofore to be useless and waste, Mr. Ruskin's chapter on the "Mountain Glory" in "Modern Painters," Vol. X.

and Eternal Energy as at once impersonal and unintelligent. The doctrine of evolution, they suppose, has put an end to what is called the teleological argument. And yet I observe that no scientist can write upon any scientific theme without perpetually assuming the reality of such design. He is continually inquiring what is the design, use, purpose, end, object, of a given organ or arrangement; the pollen in a plant, or the tissue in a body. But material things have not design, use, purpose, end, object. These words are descriptive of mental states. And their universal use in all language of science carries with it the demonstration that the mind, by an inevitable law, conceives in its study of nature of a designer, whose end, aim, and purpose he is consciously or unconsciously studying. Indeed, if he did not assume such design there would be nothing to study. The phenomena which he investigates possess a mental as well as a physical continuity; and it is that mental continuity which is the object of all science to discover; that mental continuity which gives the clue by which he traces out law and order in nature. The law of evolution has rendered nature somewhat less marvellous, only to render it far more admirable. It is less an object for our wonder, and more for our reverence.

When an eastern juggler causes a tree to grow out of the ground before me by a touch of his wand, I am astonished; but when I see the skillful artist

turning the clay upon his wheel and making it grow into a vase before my eyes, I admire and revere. The Infinite and Eternal Power, from whom all things proceed, no longer appears as a magician working mere marvels by a magic spell; we see his hand upon the clay, and in comprehending something of the method of his touch see far more to excite reverence for his skill. The doctrine of evolution, so far from eliminating the doctrine of design from the universe, has shown us the Creator using in all his work means to his ends; he achieves them, not by a mere power which *speaks* and it is done, and which, therefore, need use no skill, being limited to no instrumentalities; he achieves them by adapting instruments to their end, and bringing the most magnificent results out of the seemingly least adequate materials. Let a very simple illustration suffice. Last winter was a very variable one, and, in spite of a new furnace, we have found it almost impossible to keep an equable temperature in our house. We were alternately roasted and frozen, and could survive the rapid alternations of wind and weather only by moving from one side of the house to the other, according to the vane on the stable. But all this winter I have had a furnace in my body which has been practically self-regulating. At least I have given very little attention to it; and yet it has probably never allowed the variation of more than three or four degrees; and would not allow a varia-

tion of more than eight or ten, winter or summer, in arctic or in tropical zone. So long as this was all a mystery, it was simply a marvel. But now that science has shown us so fully (though not yet completely) the means by which this even temperature is preserved, and the process of oxygenization going on within the body which preserves it, the marvel becomes a wonder, and the experience of mere surprise is changed into one of admiration.

Nor is this the conclusion of a theologian, who gives his superficial glance at the processes of nature with a preconception in favor of divine design, which incapacitates him from truly interpreting nature's processes. From many like testimonies of purely scientific evolutionists I take one which at once confirms and illustrates the conviction, growing in the minds of all unprejudiced students of nature, that there is not only a power, but also a design, behind all its varied phenomena. I quote from Huxley's *Essay on the Origin of Species*, *Westminster Review* for April, 1860, reprinted in "*Lay Sermons*," pp. 260, 261.

"The student of Nature wonders the more and is astonished the less, the more conversant he becomes with her operations; but of all the perennial miracles she offers to his inspection, perhaps the most worthy of admiration is the development of a plant or of an animal from its embryo. Examine the recently laid egg of some common animal, such as a salamander or

a newt. It is a minute spheroid in which the best microscope will reveal nothing but a structureless sac, enclosing a glairy fluid, holding granules in suspension. But strange possibilities lie dormant in that semi-fluid globule. Let a moderate supply of warmth reach its watery cradle, and the plastic matter undergoes changes so rapid and yet so steady and purpose-like in their succession, that one can only compare them to those operated by a skilled modeller upon a formless lump of clay. As with an invisible trowel, the mass is divided and subdivided into smaller and smaller portions, until it is reduced to an aggregation of granules not too large to build withal the finest fabrics of the nascent organism. And, then, it is as if a delicate finger traced out the line to be occupied by the spinal column, and moulded the contour of the body; pinching up the head at one end, the tail at the other, and fashioning flank and limb into due salamandrine proportions, in so artistic a way, that after watching the process hour by hour, one is almost involuntarily possessed by the notion, that some more subtle aid to vision than an achromatic, would show the hidden artist, with his plan before him, striving with skilful manipulation to perfect his work."

But are not these results produced by Natural Law? Stop one moment and answer me frankly another question: Did Law ever do anything? Can it by any possibility ever do anything? Never! neither in the world of men nor in the world of matter. Law is

never anything but a statement of the way in which things are done, have been done, or will be done. Congress passes a law to dredge out the Mississippi River. But will the Law dredge it? By no means. Engineers and engines and workmen will dredge it, in accordance with the method which the Law has prescribed. The Law directs, but *does* nothing. The law of gravitation attracts the heavenly bodies to each other? No! No scientific thinker imagines that law attracts anything. The law of gravitation is the statement by careful observers of a universal fact; this, namely, that all bodies do attract each other according to the product of their mass, and inversely as the square of their distances. But this statement does not attract them. They were attracted before it was discovered, and would continue to be attracted if it were forgotten. Law is only a label which we put on phenomena. There is neither moral nor physical force in law. Law is only the statement of a fact. The fact still awaits an explanation. The law "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" was promulgated some four thousand years ago; but it has not created love. It only states what might, could, would, or should be; if it is to be, some other force than Law must bring the glad result about.

But are not these results produced by natural forces? Substitute the singular for the plural; for we have already seen that it is one Force, not many forces. Certainly; that is exactly what produces

them. That is, they are the product of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed. Whether you call this Infinite and Eternal something Energy, Force, Power, Nature, or God, is a matter of importance only or chiefly to the spelling-master. That there is in what we call nature, and back of it, manifesting itself through it, an Infinite and Eternal ONE, who pervades it, possesses it, animates it, controls it—this is the doctrine of theism against atheism, which is the doctrine that there is no such ONE, no Power, no Force, no Nature, no God, no Law; nothing but a perpetual succession of phenomena, without design, use, purpose, end, or object—a doctrine which no one can truly hold who clearly states it to himself, a doctrine that can hardly be called even a thought, since, in truth, no one really thinks it, though some unthinking people think they think it. And that this Force, Power, Energy, Nature, is ONE, not many, illimitable, not petty, benignant, not malignant, intelligent, not blind, is made clearer day by day. Thanks, Science, for thy service. Thou too, as well as Religion, hast had many false prophets, who misread and misinterpreted thee. Thou knowest not all, nor yet the half. Thou tarriest in the outer court, and must always tarry. The heart cannot know thee, and thou knowest not the heart. But thou hast wrought nobly thy ministry; thou hast corrected many an error of priest and preacher; thou hast given us a larger thought of

God than we ever could have had without thee ; we turn not disdainfully from thy teaching, because we turn to our hearts to learn what they too have to tell about Him in whose presence thou dost assure us it is an absolute certainty we all and always stand.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE UNIVERSAL PRESENCE.

HOMER pictures Jupiter and the attendant gods upon Mount Olympus taking counsel, and sending now a dream and now Minerva to carry his messages to the battle-field. She

“In haste  
Shot from the Olympic summit like a star  
Sent by the crafty Saturn’s son to warn  
The seamen or some mighty host in arms,  
A radiant meteor scattering sparkles round.”

Many Christians still imagine Jehovah after a similar fashion : dwelling on some far away Olympus, and sending his swift angel messengers to do his bidding. They localize him in their imagination in land “far, far away,” send their prayers out into the void to find him, and wait for an answer to come back. They stand at one end of the telephonic wire ; they imagine him to be within reach of the other ; but whether the wire works or not, and whether they get a hearing and an answer or not, they are always more or less uncertain. That God is a terrestrial Presence has

not yet got possession of the citadel of the timid and unspiritual mind.

Along with this pagan notion of a localized deity go other notions fitted to belong with it. Among Raphael's cartoons is one representing the creation. An elderly gentleman of benign appearance sits upon the ground, while all about him are the unfinished fragments of what might pass for an incomplete Noah's ark. The artist portrays with the pencil a picture which no longer is durable in art, but remains in philosophy. Theology still often conceives of God as a sort of Infinite manufacturer; the universe as his handiwork; the forces with which it is stored as the mainspring which he has wound up and set a-going; if it does not do his will, or if his will changes, he interferes, and gives it a new direction; this interference in minor matters makes a special providence, in larger ones a miracle. If his child wishes him to interfere, he does; if not, he leaves the machinery to take its own course; this is prayer. I do not think this is a travesty of a very common form of belief, or half-belief, which vainly strives to maintain itself against the larger, grander thought of nature which science compels the reluctant mind to accept. I state it in order to declare emphatically my disbelief of it; disbelief of its root, and of all its branches; of its conception of God, and of its notion of God's relation to the universe; of its philosophy of providence and of prayer; and to express my pro-

found gratitude to science for destroying this last and subtlest form of idolatry. This notion of a localized Olympic deity is as unscriptural as it is unscientific, as contrary to the best production of spiritual experience as it is to the best production of scientific thought. God is the Universal Presence ; and never through all eternity can you and I be nearer to him than we are at this moment—you, as you sit in your easy chair by the fire ; I, as I sit in my own chair at my library desk. Clearer views of him we may have, and I trust we shall have ; nearer to him we never can be.

The whole current of Scripture teaching, the whole tendency of the spiritually instructed Hebrew mind, was opposed to this paganized notion of a localized God. Against two forms of pagan thought respecting God the Hebrew Scriptures are a perpetual and indignant protest. Against the notion that nature is the manifestation of God the Scripture set the antipodal truth that God made man in his own image ; against the notion that God is here or there, centered and localized, it set the antipodal truth that he is the Universal Presence ; against the notion that he lived in a temple, or on a sacred hill, or in a grove, the truth that he dwells not in temples made with hands, that the heaven of heavens cannot even contain him, that the universe is his dwelling-place.

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence ?  
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there ;  
If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there ;  
If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the  
uttermost part of the sea,  
Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
And thy right hand shall hold me.  
If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me,  
Even the night shall be light about me.  
Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee,  
But the night shineth as the day ;  
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.<sup>1</sup>

It is absolutely impossible to reconcile this experience of the Hebrew poet with the unscriptural and unscientific conception of a localized God, who dwells enthroned somewhere in a central palace, and communicates with various parts of his realm by winged messengers or invisible electric wires. Equally impossible is it to reconcile that notion with such declarations in the New Testament as those of Paul, that God is not far from every one of us; that in him we live and move and have our being; that he is before all things, and in him all things consist; that God is all and in all. The philosophy of the New Testament and the poetry of the Old Testament are equally incongruous with the pagan conception of an Olympic Jehovah. He is manifested locally, for only in time and space can we perceive him; he *is* the Universal Presence, whom no eye hath seen or can see. He has but one dwelling-

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxxxix.

place—the light. Light is the ‘one universal and pervasive fact in nature, the only nature-emblem, therefore, which can suggest a dwelling-place for him.

If any reader, against this uniform teaching of Scripture, sets what he is pleased to call the pictures of the Book of Revelation, the reply is simple: the Book of Revelation is not pictorial, but symbolic. Pictures of God! The notion was abhorrent to the pious Hebrew. Symbols? Yes! Pictures? Never! Let the reader attempt to illustrate the Book of Revelation, and he will find himself whelmed in a sea of grotesqueness and absurdity. The great white throne and Him who sat upon it is not a picture, and was never intended to be imaged by the mind. It is a symbol of absolute and pure dominion. The Book of Revelation will never be truly interpreted until it is translated not into images but into thoughts.

If to disbelieve in this subtle image worship, this construction of an ethereal idol, this tenuous heaven with an enthroned King centered in it, this Raphael’s picture of a divine manufacturer of the universe, is to be skeptic—then David, Isaiah, Paul, were skeptics, and I dare to join their company. If one does not wish to, science will compel him. For science has gone far toward demonstrating the truth of Herbert Spencer’s declaration that we are “ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy

from whom all things proceed." It is as certain that we are always in the *presence* of this Infinite and Eternal Energy as that it exists, and that it is as present here upon the earth as in the remotest star. It is without center and without circumference, because it is infinite and eternal. To conceive accurately the relation which God bears to the universe, I take to be impossible. But we may seek for analogies to help us think of it. In such a search we shall find a far more helpful analogy in the relation between the soul and the body than in those between an engineer and an engine. Where is the soul in the human body? Nowhere! Everywhere! It is not localized. The spirit of man is equally present in every part of his body; and the Spirit of God is equally present in every part of the universe. He is literally All in all. His intelligence is conscious in every quivering leaf, as mine in my finger-tip: and his will is dominant in every cloud, as mine in every articulated joint. If we seek for the source of force we must ask that consciousness which I have already shown to be the basis of all belief. The only source of power of which we have knowledge resides in the will of a spirit. I will, and my arm strikes a blow. This is the last, the ultimate, fact in the analysis of the phenomena of force. What we call the forces of nature are only the will of God; what we call the laws of nature are only the habits of God. Perhaps some of them are automatic and

unconscious, others deliberate and purposed; who can tell? But laws out of God, laws other than the expression and manifestation of his will? No! not one! This is what the Scripture means when it declares that *all power* belongeth unto God. The Divine Spirit is the source and fountain of it all.

Special providences are not the interventions of a machinist with his machines; there is no machinist and no machine. They are the mastery of an Infinite Spirit over himself and the universe which he pervades with his universal presence. When the storm gathers in the west, and the thunder growls and the lightning flashes, it is no mere poetic fancy which declares, "The Lord thunders in the heavens, and the Highest gives his voice; he sends out his arrows; he shoots out his lightning;" it is literal, scientific fact. It is at least scientifically as probable an interpretation of the phenomena as that which attributes them to a galvanic battery, which has been made and left to go as it chances. When in such an hour I lift up my soul to God, it is not to some distant Divine Operator, to ask him to change the circuit of his electric current, that it may not strike me; it is to the God whose pervasive will is the source of these sublime forces, the play of which fills my soul with a joyful awe and reverence. It is no longer difficult to believe that this infinite and universal Spirit has shown himself by special acts of will, that he might attest his presence to blinded eyes and dulled hearts; nor that he will

so carry himself—and nature is but the outward semblance of himself—as not to harm the child who trusts in him.

If any critic calls this conception of the Universal Presence pantheism, it might suffice to reply that words are no longer effective missiles ; he must show its falsity, not call it names ; or it might suffice to refer him to the 139th Psalm, and bid him settle the question with the author of that sacred ode. But it is not pantheism. It does not approximate pantheism. Pantheism is the doctrine that God *is* all : very different is the truth that God is *in* all. Pantheism is to the universe what materialism is to the individual : there is no human spirit, only a body ; there is no divine Spirit, only a universe. Very different is this truth that the divine Spirit is equally present in all the universe, as the human spirit in all the body. His loving-kindness is over all his works, for he is the Universal Presence, who is not far from every one of us, in whom we live and move and have our being, but whom we are too dull of heart to see.

“Glory about thee, within thee ; and thou fulfillest thy doom,  
Making Him broken gleams and a stifled splendor and gloom.  
Speak to him, then, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet.  
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE IMAGE OF GOD.

A SHIPWRECKED traveller, stunned by the violence with which the waves have thrown him upon the coast of a wholly unknown land, awakes from his stupor to find himself in a strange house. It is equipped with every facility and every comfort. There are dry clothes for his wearing in the press, books for his reading on the shelves, a table spread with food, abundant stores for future use, and servants who wait upon him and receive and obey his orders. But in vain he asks them what this house is, who built and furnished it, and how he came there. They are dumb; they listen and obey, but speak not. Such a shipwrecked voyager is man; this world is the palace Beautiful; it contains food and apparel for his body, and instruction for his mind; and natural forces, like dumb slaves, wait upon him to do his bidding. But in vain he asks of them where he is, how he has come here out of the unknown, and by whom and for what purpose this palace has been constructed and equipped.

We have three sources and degrees of knowledge

of character; we know it mechanically, historically, personally; we know a person by his works, by his life, and by personal contact with him. "Are you familiar with Schumann?" "Oh, yes!" "When was he born?" "Oh, I know nothing about his life." "What sort of a looking man was he?" "I never saw him." "What, then, do you mean by saying that you are familiar with him?" You mean that you are familiar with his works, you know him musically, you have that knowledge of him which a study of his compositions can give you. But this is very little. It leaves you wholly in the dark as to his moral character. Was he a good husband? a kind father? a patriotic citizen? a generous friend? a man of truth and honor? His works cannot answer these questions. Nor can the paintings tell you this of the artist; nor the furniture this of the cabinet maker; nor the engine this of the mechanic; nor even the books this of the author. The letters of Carlyle or George Eliot are a revelation of character even to those most familiar with the writings of the author of "Heroes and Hero Worship," or of "Adam Bede" and "Daniel Deronda." For the record of life gives us a revelation of character which no works, not even of the pen, can give. We get from the story of Schumann or Wagner, of Carlyle or Mrs. Cross, insight into their real nature. We see them acting under trial and temptation; we hear them speaking, see them live, and in their words

and lives see their personality manifested. We no longer look at their works, we look at them. But still we do not know them, we only know *about* them. By the question, Did you know Mr. Garfield? you mean something more than, Did you know the story of his life? We all know that story. But we all recognize that there is a personal knowledge which transcends the knowledge through either works or deeds recorded. There is a personal contact of soul with soul. When we have read all that history can tell us of Abraham Lincoln, or President Garfield, or General Grant, there is still something which those only possess who have looked into the hero's eye, grasped his hand, sat by his side, and let the stream of their thought and feeling flow in a common current with his. This desire for personal acquaintance gives intense interest to all true biography, and is the one healthful element in the universal love of gossip. To every life there are these three currents; the undercurrent of works done; the inner current of life lived; the innermost current of thought and feeling, the source and spring of all the rest. The first we enter through a study of the man's products, the second through a study of his life, the third only by personal contact.

Deism allows to us only the first degree of knowledge of God; Christianity avers that we have the other two.

If there is no historical manifestation of God, there

is and can be no real knowledge of him. The pictures he paints in the western sky tell us as little of his moral character as the pictures hung upon the wall tell of the artist who has painted them; the great forces of nature tell us no more of his truthfulness or his love than the pulsations of a Corliss engine respecting the moral qualities of its builder. Watch the artist at his easel or the blacksmith at his forge, and still you know nothing of him. The universe of matter is at best but the body which God animates; and the body of itself tells us little of the soul which dwells within. Great souls inhabit little bodies, and little souls great bodies; and moral greatness can as little be measured by miles as by feet and inches. Giantship is not greatness. All religions which have had no other or better manifestation than nature to draw on for their knowledge of God have given either no clear conception of deity or a gross one. The moral Fatherhood of God is not known outside Christianity. Even in the best thoughts of paganism it is but a guess or a hope, never a conviction. Deism must always be agnostic. It may imagine much; it can know nothing. Natural religion does indeed demonstrate that we stand in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed; but any idea of deity materially more captivating than the being whom Mr. Mill describes comes, as Mr. Mill declares, "from

human wishes, or from the teaching of either real or pretended revelation."

Such a revelation Christianity avers that God has made. It declares that God has given to his children an historical manifestation of himself. He has dwelt in human history, and had the story of his life recorded. In the silent house the shipwrecked voyager finds a biography of his unknown benefactor which tells who he is and for what this hospice has been erected. It is not strange that the voyager sometimes doubts whether this book is a true record, or only the imaginings of a previous wayfarer, the skillful picture of a pious Defoe. But at all events his choice is between this book and—nothing. For there is no way conceivable by which God could afford an historical manifestation of himself except in human history. Deism coins a long word, anthropomorphological, and flings it at the Christian doctrine of incarnation; for orthodoxy has no monopoly of verbal missile throwing. But pray tell me, reader, in what form could God manifest his *moral* character to men except in human form? Could he take for a medium the dumb brute, or nature yet more dumb? Go call to the stars in their cold glory, or to the ocean in the majesty of its might, or to the prairies in the spring beauty of their wild flowers, or to the mountains in their sublime silence, Where is my God? and neither star, nor ocean, nor wild flowers will give answer, and the mountain will only mock you with

the echo of your own outcry. Nature reveals to its worshipper only what it revealed to John Keats, cloud-enveloped on the summit of Ben Nevis:

" Read me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud.  
Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist,  
I look into the chasms, and a shroud  
Vaporous doth hide them—just so much I wist  
Mankind doth know of hell ; I look o'erhead,  
And there is sullen mist ; even so much  
Mankind can tell of Heaven ; mist is spread  
Before the earth, beneath me—even such,  
Even so vague is man's sight of himself.  
Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet ;  
Thus much I know, that a poor witless elf,  
I tread on them ; that all my eye doth meet  
Is mist and crag, not only on this height,  
But in the world of thought and mental might."

Mere physical things can never, uninterpreted, manifest spiritual life. Nature worship is the worship of an Eternal Silence. Christianity is the worship of an Eternal Word.

It is the doctrine of Christianity that the Infinite and Eternal Energy, the Universal Presence, has entered into a human life, and made it all his own ; the Silence has become vocal, and vocal in human speech ; the Light which no man can approach has shadowed himself, and so become visible ; the Eternal and Infinite One has emptied himself, in the expressive language of Paul, and become in fashion as a man. We are pilgrims in a wilderness. Egypt at the one extremity and the promised Land at the other are equally unknown to us. The Word has

taken up its dwelling with us, and been tented in the camp, that we might know him. He has lived in a human life that we might see and know what his divine life is; that by seeing what Jesus was in the little space of thirty-three years, and in the little province of Palestine, we might see what the Eternal One is in the infinite universe and throughout the everlasting ages.

Two things are to be said respecting this doctrine of the historical manifestation and disclosure of God. First, it is nowhere said in the New Testament, nor is it the doctrine of the Christian Church, that Jesus of Nazareth was God. This has been sometimes said by theological teachers in the heat of theological controversy, and infidelity has seized upon and taken advantage of the erroneous declaration; but it is not the declaration of the Bible nor of discriminating Christian scholarship. It is, in truth, unthinkable that God should be a man, that God should hunger and thirst and sleep, that God should be sent from God and pray to God. What the New Testament declares is that God was in Christ; that Christ was God manifest in the flesh; that Christ was the image of God and the brightness of his glory; that there is one God and one mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus; that the Word which was with God and was God was made flesh and tabernacled among us. Look through the telescope; do you see Saturn and its

rings? Yes. Oh, no! you see a reflected or refracted image. If Saturn and its rings were where the image is they would be far too large for your eye to take in the vision. Christ is the image of God—God brought within the compass of a human vision; God manifest in the flesh. In a true sense God is forever manifesting himself in human lives. But these lives are only single colors; in Jesus Christ all the colors of the spectrum are woven together into a single perfect ray. In others they are maimed and broken by the human atmosphere through which they are refracted; in him they are as clear as when they first issued from the sun. The noblest human lives speak of God only in divers portions and in divers manners, broken, fragmentary, imperfect; Christ's life is the perfect Word. In other lives God is a pilot, but the human will still holds the helm, and is slow to obey, or obeys not. In Christ's life God holds the helm, and every movement is the movement of his perfect will. That God should become a man—this would be incredible; but that God should so enter into a human life, and so fill it with his own affluent being, that it should become the manifestation of himself to men—why should this be deemed incredible?

The other thing that is to be said is that Jesus Christ manifests not merely the attributes or qualities of God, but God himself, God's own personality. Some years ago a young man in the West sent me his

photograph with a description of himself, and asked me to find a wife for him. I declined. If he had accompanied his photograph with a phrenological chart, showing that in him conscientiousness, and reverence, and benevolence, and constructiveness, and comparison, and causality were all very large, and approbateness, and acquisitiveness, and self-esteem, and combativeness, and destructiveness were all very small, I should still have declined. For we do not love *qualities* but persons. Men may court by proxy, and marry by proxy, as kings have sometimes done ; but they cannot love by proxy. The real difference between all Socinian and Arian views of Christ on the one hand, and all Evangelical views on the other, consist in their different conception of his character in this regard. To the Unitarian, Christ is a messenger sent from God ; man, angel, archangel, or super-archangel ; still only an ambassador. Entrusted, perhaps, with a divine message ; endowed, perhaps, with divine qualities ; but still only an ambassador. To Evangelical faith he is the manifestation of God himself, God is in him ; he comes bringing not lessons from God, not knowledge about God, but God himself. Both recognize the light which shines from him to be a divine light ; but one sees in it only that light reflected, the other the original light. To one he is the moon, the sun is still unknown ; to the other he is the sun, not in its undimmed glory and grandeur, which the eye could not look upon unblinded, but still the sun, though adumbrated

and brought within the power of human vision. We see not a message from God, but God himself, though in a glass, darkly.

Those spiritual truths which have no relation to us we need not care to know; we may study them if we will, but it behooves us neither to be dogmatic in our assertions respecting them, nor worried because we can assert nothing. It is enough for us to know those truths which are directly related to our spiritual life. We can safely postpone determining what relation the sufferings and death of Christ bear to God until we determine what relation they bear to us; and what the sacred writings are to our own souls is more important for us to ascertain than what the divine spirit was to the authors who wrote them. A great deal of theology is philosophy about the other side of the moon; it may be wise deduction, it may be foolish guessing; but it is of wholly secondary importance. What are the relations of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to each other in the Godhead, it does not greatly concern us to know. For myself I object to speculations concerning them only when they are dogmatic, and to skepticism concerning them only when it is a sneer. All discussion about equality and non-equality, about generation, eternal or otherwise, about proceeding from the Father, or proceeding from the Father and Son, about Homoousian and Homoiousian, and all explanatory phrases, such as three in substance and one in essence, or three Persons in one God, are meaningless

to me. I neither believe nor disbelieve, neither accept nor reject them. I do not find them in the Bible ; nor in them any help in understanding what the Bible means—rather some hindrance. They convey no meaning to my mind and no sustenance to my spirit. If others find in them either light or food, why object ? But for those who do not, it is enough to know what Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are to human lives. That we must know, for on knowing that our highest, truest, best life depends. If that be eclipsed, the world is in darkness. And that we can know, for that relation is revealed in Scripture, and that revelation is attested by Christian consciousness : the Father, the Infinite and Eternal Life from whom all things proceed ; the Son, that Life manifested historically in a human life and in an earthly sphere ; the Spirit, that life wrought into our life and become our great Companion. In nature we know there is a God ; in Christ we know about God ; in the Holy Spirit we know God himself.

## CHAPTER VIII.

COME AND SEE.

THE reasons for the Christian's faith in Christ cannot be stated. They are unverifiable. There are reasons which can be stated, but they are not *the* reasons. Character is always and of itself its own authentication. We may believe *about* a man for reasons; we believe *in* him only for what he is to us. Faith is a spiritual sense, and it is only communicated spiritually; it goes by contact, not by argument. The child cannot tell why he believes in his mother; neither can I tell why I believe in Christ; I can only say, "Come and see." The individual doubter must grow into appreciation of Christ as the world has grown into appreciation of Christ. Love at first sight there doubtless is; but it is neither the healthiest nor the most permanent love.

It is necessary to make this clear at the outset, because I am sure the attempt to authenticate Christ's character by the argument from miracles is a misuse of the argument, and false reasoning always weakens the cause it endeavors to make strong. External evidence may authenticate a commission, but never

character. The great seal of England may prove that my Lord So-and-so is an ambassador, but not that he is a man. Nicodemus drew all the conclusion from the miracles which the miracles alone warrant: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do those miracles that thou dost except God be with him." The resurrection of Jesus Christ seems to me, on the whole, the best attested fact of ancient history; but the character of Jesus Christ does not depend upon it. We believe in the resurrection because we believe in Christ, not in Christ because we believe in the resurrection.

It is not resurrection, but Christ's resurrection, which seems credible to us. If it were alleged that Siddartha, or Mohammed, or Swedenborg, or Joe Smith rose from the dead, we should not care to investigate the allegation. The fact would seem in the first place incredible, and in the second place insignificant. Even if it were proved that Joe Smith rose from the dead, I should not turn Mormon. I might wonder at the phenomenon, but I should not admire the character. The resurrection of Christ seems to us credible because it is the natural consummation of a superhuman life, and important because it is the authentication of a character which first authenticated itself. If one does not believe in the character, it is not to be expected that he will believe in the miracle; and it is of little consequence whether he does or not. The Bible abundantly recognizes this very

simple and self-evident truth, that character must be its own authentication, and that no external credentials can justify a demand on our faith in a person whose character has not first justified that demand. "If there arise among you," said the Mosaic Statute, "a prophet or dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass whereof he spake to thee, saying, 'Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them,' thou shalt not hearken unto that prophet or that dreamer of dreams." What is this but saying that no miracle can attest character; that the primary evidence of truth and for truth is the truth itself, of character and for character is the character itself? Christ rarely if ever wrought miracles to convince unbelievers, and rarely if ever appealed to them before unbelievers. He was often asked by them to work a miracle, and habitually refused. He first attested himself to his own by his life, and then verified their faith by his works. When Nathaniel doubted whether any good could come out of Nazareth, Philip gave not only the proper answer, he gave the only possible answer, "Come and see." Goodness cannot be proved, it must be seen. When John the Baptist in prison sent two of his disciples to ascertain whether Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus went on with his ministry and told the messengers to return to their master and tell him what they had seen and heard. The soul must look and then draw

its own conclusions; and each soul for itself. If when we see him there is no beauty in him that we should desire him, nothing remains to be said. The thoughtful soul will inquire whether the fault is in the seeing or the seen; the thoughtless soul must e'en be allowed to go its own way.

There are two designs in miracles. First, they compel attention. "Jesus," says Renan, "had to choose between these two alternatives, either to renounce his mission or to become a wonder-worker." Perhaps God knew this as well as Renan. If wonders were necessary to the success of the mission, there is no reason why they should have been wanting; and they certainly were necessary. If there had been no resurrection there would be no Christianity; the disciples would have gone back to their fishing, Christ's teaching would have slept with him in his tomb, Judaism, summoned from death, would have fallen back into death, again. This arousal is needed no longer. Christianity is itself a greater miracle than any which Christ performed while on the earth. In the first century men believed in Christianity because they believed in the resurrection; in the nineteenth century they believe in the resurrection because they believe in Christianity. Miracles are also needed to verify truth intellectually after it has been spiritually apprehended. We perceive Christ's divinity in his life and character; still, we should be slow to believe his declaration—I am from above, ye are from beneath—

if there were not some sensible sign accompanying the spiritual quality. The miracle can never make an unbeliever a believer; but it may give assurance to the believer's belief. It is to his friends, not to his enemies, Christ says, "Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work's sake."

The evidence for the character of Christ is the character itself. There is and can be no other. When, a few years ago, the artists were busy discussing the question whether the Madonna at the Metropolitan Museum was really the work of Raphael or not, they made very little of the historical evidence. The discussion turned almost wholly on the qualities in the painting itself. An act of Parliament might determine the lawful authority of Oliver Cromwell, but whether he was a genius, fanatic, or impostor can be determined only by an analysis and study of the man. There is no royal road to this learning. To learn Christ is the problem of a lifetime. The ages have been studying him, and the world has not learned him yet; do not expect to find the learning put here in a paragraph. This is not a study that one can do for another. Come and see. If one must have the results of another's study, I recommend to him the little monograph on the "Character of Jesus," by Horace Bushnell. If one is willing to get those results by his own work, I recommend a meditative study of the life

itself, either in one of the Gospels or in such a harmony of the Gospels as is furnished by J. R. Gilmore's "Gospel History." But the best way, the only true, real way, is that which Jesus pointed out himself—the way of life. He who will take the life of Christ and follow it, the character of Christ, and model himself after it, will find himself growing into sympathy with Christ, and so into power to appreciate his divinity. It is only the pure in heart that see God; and only as the heart is purified that it sees God in Christ.

In no narrow or narrowing sense are we to be or can we be imitators, even, of Jesus of Nazareth. His life was such that his followers cannot, if they would, lose their individuality in following him. That life throws very little light on either specific relations or specific duties. Most of us are engaged in commercial and industrial relations. We have no record of any bargain that Christ ever made. Most of us live in family relations. He was neither a husband nor a father, and almost nothing is told us of the period of his childhood. We are citizens of a free commonwealth. He lived in an age and under a government such that obedience to the constituted authorities was the only duty of citizenship. We cannot walk in his footsteps, as we are often exhorted to do; the figure is a false, though a common, one. We are to follow him, not as a child his father through the forest, but

as every ship which has ever sailed from Europe for this western Continent has followed Columbus, while yet it has made its own path across the trackless sea. To follow Christ is not to imitate his actions, but to imbibe his spirit ; and the structureless structure of his life happily gives us no alternative. It is not a model in which any life can be cast, and therefore it is an inspiration for all living. That life is equally an inspiration to all races and all nationalities. He belongs to no age, to no country, to no race, and by and by we shall learn that he belongs to no religion. He belongs to humanity and to God. He was a Jew, but he is in no sense Jewish. The Jewish character has been sordid and worldly from the time of bargaining Jacob to the present day ; there was no sign of the sordid and selfish in Jesus of Nazareth. It has been narrow and exclusive ; no character in history so catholic as Jesus of Nazareth. In its highest phases it has been Pharisaic, ruled by a conscience always exacting and generally ceremonial ; no life so free, so joyous, so regardless of what I may call the mere etiquette of religion as that of Jesus of Nazareth. In these three great characteristics of Hebrew character he is the antipode of his race, yet in neither reacting against them, as Carlyle against the legalism of Scotland, or Emerson against the intellectualism of New England. He is as free from asceticism as from worldliness, from a sentimental philanthropism as from a narrow dogmatism; and from license and law-

lessness as from bondage to the law. Each of these reactions has been exhibited, and on a large scale, in the church which grew from his grave; but neither of them finds the slightest warrant in his life. He is not Jewish, nor anti-Jewish, but human. The German, the Frenchman, the Englishman, and the American, all find in him a Master transcending all national peculiarities, yet prohibiting none. The Roman Catholic in the great cathedral, and the Methodist itinerant in the greater cathedral of the primeval forest, alike look up to and worship him with no thought of the incongruity upon which he looks kindly and sympathetically down. We have, indeed, until lately, regarded Jesus as essentially Occidental, by a kind of anachronism imagining him like ourselves, because we had endeavored to become like him. But now comes Mozoomdar with his "Oriental Christ," and claims him as equally the prophet of the land of the Orient, the type of manhood for meditative India as for bustling America, the model of dreamy thought as of ceaseless action. There is no other character in history which is thus accepted as the ideal of manhood and the disclosure of Godhood by men of all races, nationalities, creeds, and rituals.

What is more inexplicable is the fact that he who transcends all distinctions of race transcends also the universal distinction of sex, and is accepted alike by the most refined and delicate women and the most heroic men as their ideal. A womanly man and a

manly woman are alike the object of a commingled feeling of horror and contempt. How one who is neither an effeminate man nor a masculine woman can be a model for both men and women is a puzzle not to be solved intellectually; not to be solved at all until, in the development of womanhood, we have reached a truer conception of sex as a mental and moral fact in human life, and a truer conception of the mystic declaration that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them;" as a hint of the qualities in Him who mirrors himself in his daughters no less than in his sons. Hitherto it must be confessed that pre-eminence has been given both in art and literature to the more delicate and tender side of Christ's character, because he has been the theme of the poet and the recluse, rather than of the man of action.

But we are beginning to perceive dimly the manliness of Christ; to see in him a hero above all other heroes. It is often said that there is no pen-and-ink portrait of Jesus in the New Testament, and the lack has often been lamented. It is true; yet it contains a symbolical picture which suggests some features of his impressive presence. The vision which John saw in spirit on the Lord's Day, and which recalled to him the Son of man, had eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like fine brass, and a voice as the sound of many waters. I wonder whether John remembered that day

when alone, with flashing eyes, and a martial tread, and a voice of thunder, Christ drove from the Temple courts, the traffickers who disgraced it; or that hour when, with his face steadfastly set, he went up to Jerusalem, his disciples following behind, not venturing to question him, and whispering to one another beneath their breath; or that day when the mob in Jerusalem took up stones to stone him, and he passed through their midst unharmed, while they parted before him like the waves of the Red Sea at Aaron's rod; or that night when the Temple police came out to arrest him and he came from his praying to meet them, and put himself between them and his affrighted disciples, just awakened from their sleep, and demanded of the police sternly whom they sought, and held them at bay by the mere power of his presence till his disciples gathered their scattered wits and fled. We have not completed our study of Christ till we have looked both on the picture of him stooping and writing on the ground that he might not further abash the shrinking adulteress at his side, until her last accuser had gone out; and that other picture of him standing in the Temple and pouring out upon the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, an invective of scorn which has no parallel in either ancient or modern literature.

Transcending all distinctions of individual idiosyncrasy, of race and nationality, and even of sex, the character of Christ transcends also all the progress

of the ages. He still marches at the head of humanity; and the world, after eighteen centuries, has much to learn before it has learned him, and much to do before it has become him. The influence of most men dies with them; if in some few instances it survives, it grows less and less as the years pass on. First a power, then an influence, then only a memory: of whom is not this true, if we except Jesus of Nazareth? In his case the reverse is true. He died in darkness and amid scorn and contumely. The religion of Judea, the culture of Greece, the power of Rome, knew him not. The few faithful friends who still clung to his memory were not too many to be contained in one upper chamber. To-day his name fills the world; the cross, emblem of ignominy, on which he seemed to perish, but was crowned, holds out its arms as in benediction upon many a village christening about the churches consecrated to his service, and is worn as the outward symbol of the heart's adoration on many a woman's breast; and the last eighty years of the church's life sees a greater accession to his followers, than the total growth of all the eighteen hundred years which preceded. The scoffs and sneers of infidelity are silenced, not by the arguments of Christian scholars, but by the character of Christ himself; and Renan, Hooykaas, and John Stuart Mill join in ascriptions of honor to his name and in expressions of gratitude for his influence.

"Whatever else may be taken away from us," says

John Stuart Mill, "by rational criticism, Christ is still left; a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of his followers. The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which he is reputed to have wrought. But who among his disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee: as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from the higher source. . . . About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this preëminent genius

is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life."

It is safe to assume that none of my readers have less religious faith than John Stuart Mill. To such as have no more I recommend his counsel. Accept Jesus Christ as your "ideal representative and guide," and translate the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete by an endeavor so to live that Christ will approve your life. So you will grow, as the world has grown, into a knowledge of him. This is what I mean by "Come and see."

## CHAPTER IX.

"YE KNOW HIM."

**N**O English writer except Shakespeare has surpassed George Eliot in keen insight into human life and the power of truthfulness in portraying it. And no scene in George Eliot's dramas surpasses in dramatic power the prison scene in "Adam Bede," between Dinah Morris and Hetty. Hetty is to be executed on the morrow for the murder of her babe ; and Dinah has come to bring her to repentance and to God.

" You won't leave me, Dinah ? You'll keep close to me ? "

" No, Hetty, I won't leave you. I'll stay with you to the last. But, Hetty, there is some one else in this cell, besides me, some one close to you."

Hetty says, in a frightened whisper, " Who ? "

" Some one who has been with you through all your hours of sin and trouble, who has known every thought you have had, has seen where you went, when you lay down and rose up again, and all the deeds you have tried to hide in darkness. And on Monday, when I can't follow you, when my arms can't reach you, when death has parted us, He who

is with us now and knows all will be with you then. It makes no difference whether we live or die, we are in the presence of God."

Curious enigma, that such a picture should be painted by one who, several months before, had written of herself that she did not believe in a creative cause. Was it the unconscious testimony of a woman's faith to a present God, a faith which neither her literary fellowship with Strauss and Feuerbach, nor her personal fellowship with George Lewis and Herbert Spencer, had yet been able to stifle? Was it the vision of a clear eye before as yet the eyesight had been dimmed? Does it take its place with John Stuart Mill's testimony to Jesus, as the witness of an unbeliever, despite himself, to the truth of the spiritual life? Or was it only a dramatist's picture of human emotion? Was George Eliot the philosopher or George Eliot the dramatist the real George Eliot? That is a curious question in character study, but one not necessary for us to answer here. For in either case the scene is an unconscious witness to the truth of Dinah Morris's vision. The dramatist does not create, he represents; and whether George Eliot believed in her atheism and only imagined her God, or believed in God and only imagined her atheism, she portrayed truth, and truth which for the moment she saw, when she reported Dinah Morris's assertion: "There is some one in the cell besides me, some one close to you."

This truth of a present God is the consummate truth of divine revelation and of human experience. All else in revelation leads up to this; all else in religious experience prepares for and grows out of this. Nature assures us that there is a God, the Christ of eighteen centuries ago tells who he is, that we may spiritually enter into fellowship and have acquaintance with him. That he has the power of directly and immediately communicating with man, that man has the power of directly and immediately entering into communication with him, these two correlative truths are the ultimate disclosure of revelation and the ultimate fact of experience.

I do not wonder at skepticism without the church in this fact of spiritual experience, since it is hardly believed within the church. "I will not leave you orphans," said Christ, as he was about to depart. The great majority of Christians seem to be orphans. They believe in a Father that once was; they believe in a Father that is yet to be; but they do not believe in a Father that now is; in a living God; in a Perpetual Presence. Their religion is a memory or a hope, not a present life. They relegate divine inspiration to past ages, and postpone divine fellowship to future ages. They are like men in a tunnel, who look back and see the light at the end they have entered, and look forward and see the light at the end from which they are to emerge; but now are in the darkness. To think that God did not guide Moses is in-

fidel ; but it seems to them almost as infidel to believe that he did guide Abraham Lincoln. To doubt that he dwelt with his people in Palestine is unbelief ; to think that he dwells with his people in the United States is presumption. What Peter means by the promise, " Ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, for the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off;" what Paul means by the prayer, " That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God ;" what John means by the declaration, " Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ," they do not know. He who attempts to interpret these and kindred utterances seems to them mystical, visionary, dangerous. They believe in a voice that once spoke, but not in a voice now speaking ; they listen to the echo, and try to be content. Their God exists for them only in the pluperfect and the future-perfect tenses, not in the present tense. They believe in " I was that I was," and in " I shall be that I shall be," but not in " I am that I am."

I believe that the larger faith is easier than the faith that is provincial and epochal ; faith in a universal God is easier than faith in a God local and episodic. It is easier to believe in the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, if we also believe in the demon of Socrates ; easier to believe in the faith faculty of Paul if we also believe in the Yoga faculty of Baboo Chunder Sen. The lines of communication have al-

ways been open between God and the souls of men. Inspiration belongs neither to times, to races, nor to individuals, but to humanity. Inspiration, as it is limited to no people, so to no mental faculty. The God who inspired Moses to frame laws, inspired Bezaleel to design the tabernacle. Art, literature, music have felt the impulse of divine in-breathings as truly as law, ethics, and theology. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," said the Hebrew prophet, "because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Whoever has felt this commission and entered on this work has received this anointing and been impelled by this Spirit. Wherever there is a flower there has been sunlight; and the flora in the coal beds are witnesses that once it shone in places from which it now is and for ages past has been excluded. It is true that there are differences in races, as in individuals, which make the results of the divine inspiration different.

All flowers are not the same, though all are brooded by the same sun. The flora of the Alpine valleys and of the South American forests are children of the same sunlight; one parentage, different progeny. We go back to Greece for our architecture, to Rome for our jurisprudence, to Palestine for our spiritual literature. The Hebrew nation, with all its apostasies and all its sordidness, was the most spiritually

minded of all ancient nationalities. During a period of nearly sixteen centuries, nearly double that of our own Anglo-Saxon civilization, the most spiritually minded of this people were conveying to Israel the inspiration which they had received from God in their highest and best spiritual moods. The purest and best of these instructions—by a process of natural selection or divine election, whichever the reader prefers, the terms are synonymous—were preserved and brought together. This is our Bible. It is the record of God's dealing in the spiritual realm with a people whose genius was spiritual, interpreted in the most spiritual experiences of their most spiritual thinkers and actors. It is thus the sifted product of human thought under divine inspiration. It is the standard of spiritual truth and life, because it is divinely selected from the world's highest and best spiritual thinking; not because the world has never done any other, nor because God has never touched any other hearts, or spoken through any other lips. We go back to Plato for philosophy, to Phidias for art, to Justinian for law, and to Shakespeare for interpretation of human emotion; and I see no reason to doubt that God gave us these as well as Moses and Paul.

If any one asks whether I suppose the inspiration of Paul and Plato were the same in kind, and different only in degree, I answer that I cannot tell. As I do not know how God operated on either the mind of

Paul or the mind of Plato, as I do not know how he operates on the minds of his children to-day, as I do not even understand how one mind operates upon another, I cannot tell how operation differs from operation. I cannot see the fingers that play upon the instrument ; I only hear the music—and that is different. That the Bible, in its nature and its effects, differs radically from all other books and all other literature, I shall hope to show in a future chapter, and how it differs. What I am now anxious to make clear is that God's touch of human souls was not an extraordinary phenomenon, confined to fifty Hebrew authors, and coming to an abrupt end eighteen centuries ago ; but is the natural law of human life, having its highest but by no means its only, illustration in the sacred writings of the Jewish people. God as truly inspires every mother who invokes his aid in guiding her child as he did Moses, but not to the same end ; every devout preacher as truly as he did Paul on Mars Hill, but not for the purpose of producing a sermon on natural religion for all ages.

The influence of spirit on spirit is the commonest experience of our daily life. It is wrought through the intermediary of words, of signs, of books, and of the more subtle influence of presence, defying all analysis. It is more potent than law, truth, or example. It seems sometimes to pass from soul to soul, overleaping space and disdaining all instruments. Why should I think it incredible that the

Great, the Master Spirit, should work in like manner on the spirits of his children? Why should I shrug my shoulders at the testimony of credible witnesses who attest it, not only by their words, but by the power of their lives? Why should I doubt the testimony of my own heart in its highest and best hours? For there are times when He comes so near to me, and is so close to me, and his counsel is so clear, and his strong uplifting so full of inspiration, that no presence of father or mother or wife or child can compare for nearness. They sit by my side; but He is with me and dwells *in* me.

In such hours I do not look out on nature to see the evidence of a Workman in his works; nor into my New Testament to see the image of God in a human life and character: I look within, and see God himself, for his Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am a son of God; I see him no longer through a glass, darkly, but already face to face.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

LADY MACBETH instigates her weaker husband to the murder of his sleeping guest ; then, when the crime is perpetrated, comes upon the scene walking in her sleep, and endeavoring in vain to cleanse away the imaginary spot of blood from hands which all the perfumes of Arabia can never sweeten. Bill Sykes beats with brutal fist a blow upon the upturned face of Nancy, leaves her dead body in a pool of blood, and flees. But wherever he goes the haunting phantom of the murdered girl follows him. He traces its shadow in the gloom ; he hears its garments rustling in the leaves ; if he stops, it stops ; if he runs, it keeps pace with him ; he leans his back against a bank, and feels it standing visibly above him against the cold night sky ; he flings himself upon the ground, upon his back—it stands at his head, silent, erect, a living gravestone, the widely staring eyes, lustreless and glassy, appearing in the midst of darkness, light in themselves, but giving light to nothing. Is there any power that can cleanse Lady Macbeth's blood-stained hand ? any power that can lay the haunt-

ing figure which pursues Bill Sykes to his death? Modern skepticism says, distinctly, No! "Can the favor of the Tsar make guiltless the murder of old men and women and children in Circassian valleys? Can the pardon of the Sultan clean the bloody hand of a Pasha? As little can any God forgive sins committed against men:" so says Professor Clifford. Christianity says, Yes! "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon:" so says the prophet Isaiah. The issue is fairly joined. Which shall we believe?

But the issue is more, deeper. Sin is worse than any punishment, worse even than remorse. Is there any cure for it? Conduct often repeated becomes a habit; habit long continued becomes a second nature. Thus we are building ourselves for good or for evil, generally for both. We *are* what we have done. It is physiologically true that the tissues of muscle, nerve, brain, are made by our physical activities. It is morally and spiritually true that our mental and moral nature is made by our mental and moral activities. If we have built awry—and who has not?—daubed with untempered mortar, put unseasoned timber in, is there any power that can rebuild? that can undo our own undoing? No question for any one of us more important than this; for there is not one of us in whom there is not some poor material, or

material poorly used. Not one of us who does not need rebuilding in whole or in part. Again the same clear, distinct issue. Modern skepticism says, emphatically, No! "Take what figure you will," says Ralph Waldo Emerson, "its exact value, nor more nor less, still returns to you. Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty." "She" (George Eliot), says Lord Acton, "thought that the world would be indefinitely better and happier if men could be made to feel that there is no escape from the inexorable law that we reap what we have sown." So modern unbelief; not so the ancient Christian faith: "He will subdue our iniquities," says the prophet Micah; "and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." "In whom," says the Apostle Paul, "we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins." Here again is the issue clearly made. Which shall we believe: Emerson or Micah, George Eliot or Paul?

What the New Testament offers to do for men is not to rid them of punishment, but to rid them of sin. The forgiveness of sins is, in Biblical phraseology, the sending away of sin. The sin is a record, and it is blotted out; a stain, and it is washed away; a cloud, and the sun drinks it up; a corpse, and it is buried in the depths of the sea. The punishment may also disappear, or it may not. The Bible treats death as the penalty of sin, but men still die in spite

of forgiveness. David rejoiced in forgiveness: "Thou forgavest," he said, "the iniquity of my sin." But the child of his illicit love died, and all the penalty of rebellion and open shame, which the prophet foretold, came upon him in his later years. The sin was forgiven, but the penalty remained. The promise of forgiveness is not a promise of deliverance from penalty; it is the promise of peace, and the promise of virtue. The stain can be washed from Lady Macbeth's hand, and raveled sleep reknitted, and the murdereress can become a saint. The phantom that haunts Bill Sykes can be buried in the depths of the sea, and the brute can become a son of God. If the Gospel is not curative, it is nothing. This is its function. It claims to undo our undoing, to repair the irreparable past; by this test it must be tried. Christian faith believes it: modern skepticism doubts or denies.

There is a dumb prophet of redemption in nature, whose voice might well prepare us to listen for a voice of pardon in the spiritual realm. The effects of physical sin are not irreparable. On the contrary, the moment the sin ceases, the work of reparation begins. The broken bone, reset, begins to knit together; the cut flesh begins to close up; and where the tissue has been burned away, nature mercifully produces new tissue to take its place. The dyspeptic ceases to violate the laws of health, and the stomach begins to repair the ravages which he has made in it· the drunk-

ard abandons his cups, and the body begins to cast out the alcoholized tissues and bring new and healthy ones to take their place. If nature is unable unaided to repair the wrong, there are reparative agencies in the world outside ready to give their aid in such force and number that it is beginning to be believed that there is no disease which humanity has brought upon itself by its violation of natural law, for which there is not somewhere, stored up in God's pharmacopeia, an instrument of repair. It is not true that there is no escape from the inexorable law that we reap what we have sown. On the contrary, the moment we stop our sowing, a door of escape from the dreadful harvest is opened to us, in our misery, by Mercy.

In the Elmira Reformatory, in the State of New York, there are gathered 600 convicts, of every grade of crime, from petty larceny to arson and manslaughter. They are sent here not to be punished, but to be cured. When a prisoner is delivered at the Reformatory, the Superintendent commences at once an investigation of his case, examines him personally, estimates the possibility of his character both for good and for evil, and inquires into his heredity, his early education, his associates; forms a plan for his recovery to honesty and virtue, and sets himself to accomplish it. And in spite of a community only half-Christianized, in spite of a church which only half believes in redemption, in spite of sectarian differences that prohibit the full and free use of the Christian religion in the work

of reformation, eighty-one per cent. of the inmates of the Reformatory, when they graduate, go back to the community to prove the genuineness of their reform by lives of honest industry. Nature forgives sins against the laws of nature, and society is beginning to forgive, though in a grumbling and half-hearted way, sins against the laws of society. Is it God only who does not forgive sins?

Still seeking to know whether George Eliot or Paul reads aright the book of life, I look out upon it, and, looking, I see such lives as those of Augustine, Bunyan, and John B. Gough. I see the pagan *roué* transformed into the father of modern theology, the drunken tinker transformed into a prophet, whose vision of the Pilgrim's Progress will outlive all mere theological systems; the inebrate citizen transformed into a preacher of temperance to two continents, the fruits of whose redeeming work will outlive all philosophies and all literatures. These are but extraordinary illustrations of a transformation of character which is an ordinary though wholly inexplicable phenomenon of human life. No outward cause exists which suffices to account for it.

To the rationalist the explanation is indeed ready and simple; but it is too ready and too simple. "It needs only will power, and all things are possible." But this power that transforms, rescues alike the wilful and the weak of will. It seizes on the inebrate bookbinder just when all hope is gone and all pur-

pose lies limp and helpless. If any credit is to be given to human testimony, this is a "power *not ourselves* that makes for righteousness." If any credit is to be given to the deductions of philosophy, it must be a power not ourselves, and always a power not ourselves. For a soul can no more create its own moral force than a machine can create its own physical force. All education and elevation is by the play of a higher nature on the lower, the parent on the child, the teacher on the pupil, the orator on the audience, the leader on the nation. Romulus, left to be suckled by a she-wolf, the world counts as a legend; it is not thus that babes are trained to manhood. A schoolmate of mine undertook to lift himself by his own boot straps, and was quite sanguine that after a while he would succeed; but he never did. The power to lift is always outside the lifted. This is as true of the race as of the individual. What one has absolutely no power to do, two, twenty, two hundred million have no more power to do. For twice nothing is nothing, and twenty times nothing is still nothing.

Nor is this forgiveness of sins a mere individual phenomenon. The history of the race is the history of the forgiveness of sins, of the transformation of character, of the development of a higher, purer, better manhood. "Huge bodies, cold-blooded, with fierce reddish flaxen hair; ravenous stomachs, filled with meat and cheese, heated by strong drinks; of a cold tempera-

ment, slow to love, home-slayers, prone to drunkenness. . . . Of all barbarians these are the strongest of body and heart, the most formidable, we may add the most cruelly ferocious. . . . Settling in England, they become more gluttonous, carving their hogs, filling themselves with flesh, swallowing down deep draughts of mead, ale, spiced wines, all the strong, coarse wines they can procure, and so they are cheered and stimulated." These are the features of our ancestors, the Anglo-Saxon race, in early England. It does not lie in us to deny that transformation of character is racial as well as personal, that for nations, as well as for individuals, sins are buried in the depths of the sea: nay, that the very elements of character which once made red-handed crime, transformed, make stalwart-handed industry, so that the sins that were scarlet become white as snow, and those that were crimson become like wool. Whether Christianity has had anything to do with this transformation is another question, to be considered in another chapter; that there *is* a transformation is what I seek to make clear here and now: that we have, whether in Christ or out of him, a remission—*i. e.*, a dismissal—of sins; that neither in individual nor in race life do we reap what we have sown; that neither in individual nor in race life do we receive the exact value for the figure we have set down; that on the contrary, we sow the pagan *roué* and reap the Christian theologian, sow the drunken tinker, and reap the Christian poet, sow the inebriate citizen and

reap the temperance Chrysostom, sow a race of gluttonous barbarians and reap English and American civilization.

There are great divine laws of punishment; he is blind who does not see them. But retribution is not the only fact. There are also great laws of healing. Therapeutics is also a science—therapeutics moral as well as physical, for the spirit as well as for the body. There is a law of sin and death; but there is a higher law of the spirit of life, which makes humanity free from the law of sin and death, plucks us out of it, redeems us from it. There are forces to punish and forces to save. And he who ceases to do evil and will learn to do well, finds himself in that instant taken out of the lower law and brought under the power of the higher law; under forces which work, in body and in spirit, in individual and in race, for help and for healing.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE LAW OF SACRIFICE.

**W**HAT," asked a friend once of Mr. William M. Evarts, "is the secret of Dr. John Hall's pulpit power?" "His personality," was the prompt response. This is the secret of all moral power. Personality is communicable; and we are all of us continually communicating it to each other. The greatest and best of all gifts is that which we unconsciously bestow; the most terrible of all burdens is that which we unconsciously impose. We barter qualities with one another. The commerce in character transcends all other commerce. It is continuous and ceaseless, broken in upon only by sleep. All methods of expression are only the instruments of exchange, the coin in the spiritual realm, by which we carry this commerce on.

Personality is the battery; speech, literature, music, art, are only the wires that carry the current; of no use unless there is a current to be carried. The lack of this personality in music is expressed in the familiar phrase, "there is no soul in his playing." The true musician, whether his instrument is a single violin or

a great orchestra, is one whose soul is surcharged with a life which words cannot utter ; and his bow or his baton becomes utterer for him. No skillful technique can take the place of soul ; and no lack of it can quite destroy the power of soul. A hearer once complimented Ole Bull on the wonderful effects which he had produced on his audience by his violin. The indignant musician rejected the blundering compliment. "It was not my violin," said he, "it was I, myself, that did it." If a great soul be present in the orator, gesticulation may be awkward, presence insignificant, rhetoric uncultured, even grammar neglected, and yet the audience will be thrilled. As a boy I once listened for an hour to Gavazzi in the Italian tongue, fascinated, though I could only pick out here and there single sentences and isolated words. If the great soul be absent we have, not an orator, but a rhetorician and a declaimer. England has produced many a greater scholar than Arnold of Rugby, but no such teacher, for never a soul with such power to reproduce his own image on the sensitized plate of a human soul. Great leaders make little men great by their own distributed greatness. Sheridan hears the sound of the cannon far down the Shenandoah Valley, rides in hot haste toward the battle echoes, meets his soldiers fleeing in panic from the field, rises in his stirrups, waves his sword in air, and cries, "We're going the other way, boys ! we're going the other way !" and they turn and do go the

other way, and convert rout into victory, reinforced only by the presence of a single hero, whose personality transforms a panic stricken mob into heroes like himself. Personality, and the power to impart it, makes mother more potent than king or queen, and her kingdom one that ruleth over all. She goes down to that door that swings both ways on its hinges ; knows not whether through it she shall go out into the unknown, or through it out of the unknown a new life shall come to her ; receives it and straightway begins to pour her own life into the receptive life laid upon her bosom. She did enjoy society, but now the only society she cares for is that of the eyes which look trustingly up into hers. She was fond of music ; the only songs she now cares for are the lullabys she croons to her baby. She rejoiced in literature ; now "*Mother Goose*" is her library. In sickness and health, in toil and rest, at home and abroad, she lives for the life that is grafted upon her own, scornful of pity, and conceiving no higher happiness than by and by to lean on the arm, which she has made strong in her strength, and trust in the heart which has been made pure and true and faithful by her own purity and truth and faithfulness. Soul teaches soul, character influences character, by direct radiation. Personality is more than either authority or wisdom. We are transformed, not by laws enforced by penalty, nor by philosophy expounded by eloquence, but by the power of a more

potent personality molding us to its own pattern. We give and receive direct soul-impressions. Every one of us leaves an impress on every one he touches; every one of us receives an impress from every one who touches him.

Why should it be deemed a strange or incredible belief that this power of humanity should also be the power of God? that this transforming energy which proceeds from all great souls should proceed most of all from the greatest Soul of all? This is the power of the Gospel—the transforming power of a Divine Personality; of a Teacher who impresses his own character on his pupils; of a Musician who beats time for the universe, and evokes his own symphony of life out of universal humanity; of a Mother who imparts life to the helpless babe and builds it up into a child of God, wrought into the divine image. To this the two great leaders of skeptic thought in our age bear testimony. The Infinite and Eternal Energy in whose presence we ever stand, according to Herbert Spencer, is according to Matthew Arnold, a Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness. God is forever giving himself to his children, as the orator gives himself to his audience, and the mother herself to her children. This is "justification by faith;" not a promised deliverance from some unknown future punishment, if we will believe something in the creed or catechism, a bribe to the intellect to make believe that it believes what it really

does not believe, but a present transformation of character, when we open our souls to the influence of the Eternal and Infinite Personality from whom all things proceed, all things spiritual as well as all things material. When we with unveiled face behold the image of this Lord of glory, and then reflect it in our lives, so reproducing in others what he has first produced in us, we are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit. We become heirs of God ; not inheriting something from him, as bonds or stocks or lands, but inheriting himself, as a child inherits the qualities of his father. We become a "chip of the old block," partakers of the divine nature, filled with all the fullness of God.

Now, this work of character-building cannot be carried on without suffering. Pain is the great peacemaker, and pain is the great purifier. One soul cannot purify another until it knows that other's sin, and it cannot know that other's sin without feeling the full burden of it. An unsuffering hero cannot save a sinful nation, nor an unsuffering pastor a sinful congregation, nor an unsuffering teacher a sinful pupil, nor an unsuffering mother a sinful child, nor an unsuffering God a sinful race. This is the climax of the Gospel. Christian theism has three articles: first, Herbert Spencer's "We are in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed;" second, Matthew Ar-

nold's, This Energy is a "Power not ourselves, that makes for righteousness;" third, Paul's, This Power makes for righteousness by entering into and bearing the burden of all unrighteousness—"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." There is no other way. The law of sacrifice is the eternal law of life.

A boy wanders off into dissipation, becomes gay, fast, dissolute. His mother, a woman of the world, cares not, so long as dissipation does not bring social disgrace. But in the selfishness of the two, animal selfishness in the son, social selfishness in the mother, they drift further and further apart. What is necessary to bring them at one again? and, bringing them at one, to begin in him the work of reformation? Clearly the mother must feel the disgrace of her son's sin. Clearly he must feel it too. When to both the sin appears as sin, when both feel a shame and horror in it, they are at one; and he can begin to mend, and she to help him. If he cares not, all her tears and prayers can never put them upon the same plane, and bring their lives into a community of life. If she cares not, all his repentance will bring him no nearer her, nor obtain from her one inspiration to a better life. Not till she feels the shame of his sin as though it were her own, and he feels it as his own, are mother and son at one; not till then is at-one-ment made between them; not till then can these two walk and work together for his reform.

If the father of the prodigal had not felt the burden of his son's criminal career, no going home by the son, with penitence in his heart and confession in his life, could have brought father and son together. "The father was moved with compassion :" think for one moment the depth of meaning contained in that one sentence. To feel compassion (*con and patior*) is to suffer with. The father suffered in his son, with his son, for his son ; and by and in that suffering made that sacrifice for sin without which love can never help those who most need love's help. Imagine for a moment a group of Jewish rabbis looking on that moment of reconciliation between father and son, and discussing the meaning of the father's tears. "I think," says one, "that he weeps that he may induce his reluctant heart to forgive and to forget." "That cannot be," says a second ; "but he remembers the eldest son, and the neighbors, and weeps that he may show them how terrible a thing is sin, and make it safe for him to forgive." "You are both wrong," exclaims a third ; "he weeps, and watches with anxious eyes the effect of his tears upon his recreant son, hoping that it will produce so profound a moral influence upon him that his repentance will be deep, genuine, and abiding." And I see the father looking up with wonder in his eyes and suppressed indignation in his voice, as he says: "You are doubtless learned men ; but you do not know a father's heart. If you did, you would not ask why a

father should weep over his sinful boy. I weep neither to satisfy my own sense of justice, nor to justify my forgiving kindness to my elder son, nor to play upon the sympathies of my returning prodigal. I weep because I am a father and he is my son, and the father must ever sorrow in the sins and sorrows of the child of his love."

A friend of mine not long since attended an orthodox church where an evangelist was preaching a revival sermon. He told the following story to illustrate the atonement: A father and son quarrelled. The father banished the son from the house. The son departed, vowing that he would never return till his father recalled him. The mother, heart-broken at such a quarrel, sought in vain to pacify the angered pride and break the stern resolution of her husband. She grieved, grew pale and wan, fell into decline, took to her bed, and drew near to inevitable death. The father at last so far yielded to her interceding as to send a message in her name to the exiled boy to return; but he would not come. Her thin face grew so eloquent that even his strong nature could not resist it, and at last he sent a message in his own name. The boy came, but as unreconciled as when he went out from the roof-tree, and father and son would not speak to each other. The mother's pleading voice lost its power of pleading, and still her eyes plead for her. Father and son stood on either side her bed to bid her a last good-by. She reached her feeble hand

out, took their hand in hers, clasped them, held them together in her own, and so died. The hands which she had clasped in dying love they could not unclasp in living enmity, and, kneeling by her death-bed, mingled their prayers and tears together. She who had sought in vain to reconcile them by her life made reconciliation between them by her death. And this story of a father's cruel pride was told to illustrate the love of Him who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son for its redemption.

I repeat it here to put in clear, strong, emphatic terms my abhorrent disbelief of any and every doctrine of atonement which underlies such horrible travesties of God's nature as this. The cross of Christ was a mystery to Paul. I am not loath to acknowledge that it is a mystery to me. But some things are clear about it. It cannot be true that Christ died to induce a reluctant God to forgive; nor to enable a God bound hand and foot by his own laws to forgive; nor as a dramatic spectacle to exert a moral influence upon mankind, that they might be induced to accept his forgiveness. The passion of the Son of God is a revelation in time of an eternal fact. The Lamb of God is a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; the Sinbearer is an eternal Sinbearer; the heart of Christ is a revelation of the heart of God, and he who bore the sins of the world upon his heart until it broke and gave him release from the slow agony of the cross bears them still, and will bear them until

sin shall be no more. God is a suffering God. Love is a suffering love ; for there is and can be no true love that does not suffer so long as loved ones sin. The Eternal and Infinite Energy from which all things proceed, the Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness, is an Energy and a Power that enter into the suffering of sinful humanity, and bear it until that sin is by his suffering borne away to be buried in the depths of the sea forever.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BOOK OF PROMISE.

What is the *orthodox* theory, and what is *your* theory (if the two are not the same), of divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

If we are to believe that God inspired the writers of the different books, we must also believe that he inspired likewise those who decided the canonicity of the sacred writings. And if our English Bible is to be accepted as inspired, the translators must have been inspired also. This, however, cannot be, else there would be no necessity for repeated translations. How are we to know that the sixty-six books of the Bible contain nothing but divine truth, and that no divinely inspired revelation is to be found outside of the Bible? An ordinary layman is compelled to look to Biblical scholars for help in determining such questions as these, and he is often perplexed, as from time to time he finds sentences, verses, parts, indeed of chapters, rejected as interpolations and spurious. For example, the Second Epistle of St. Peter is (so we are told) probably *not* from St. Peter's pen at all. Yet the salutation in the first verse claims to be from the Apostle. If the first sentence be fraudulent, why accept the rest of the Epistle as from God? "False in one, false in all." So able and godly a man as Dr. Adam Clarke rejects positively the Song of Solomon. Many reject the Book of Esther, and so on. If these books do not belong in the canon—in other words, are *not* inspired—how do we know that like mistakes have not occurred in placing other books in the canon? On the other hand, the Romish Church accepts as God's inspired word many books which Protestants reject. How shall the ordinary layman know that the Romanists are not nearer the truth than the Protestants?

THIS letter, which I not long since received, represents undoubtedly a common perplexity respecting the Bible in the minds of earnest, honest, sincere

Christians, who are unwilling to give up the Bible, but who are absolutely incapable of holding to an irrational faith merely because it is unpleasant to surrender it. I print it here as the text for this and the following chapter, not because it represents all the difficulties involved in the orthodox or any other theory of inspiration, nor because I propose to answer these questions categorically, but because it indicates the character of the difficulties which I desire in some measure to meet.

The first thing to be noted in answering these questions is that the Bible is not a book, but a library; perhaps I should rather say a literature. It is composed of sixty-six different books, written by between forty and fifty different authors; written centuries apart, in different languages, to different peoples, for different purposes, in different literary forms. It is the selected literature of fifteen centuries; it includes law, history, poetry, fiction, biography, and philosophy. It is to be read as a literature, interpreted as a literature, judged as a literature. One may therefore reject a book from this collection of literature and yet believe in the literature. It is not like a painting, which either is or is not the work of one master; it is a gallery of paintings, in which some works may be originals and others copies. To believe in the Bible is one thing, to believe in the canonicity of every book in the Bible is a very different thing. Luther believed in the Bible, though he rejected the Epistle

of James, and Dr. Adam Clarke believed in the Bible, though he rejected Solomon's Song.

But although the Bible is not a book, yet this literature possesses a unity other than that given to it by binder's boards. It is not a mere aggregation of books. A common spirit animates, a common character belongs to it. If it were not so, it would never have borne the semblance of a book for so many years and in so many minds. These literary remains of fifteen centuries of Jewish history were not collected together by an ecclesiastical council, nor by one authorized editor. Indeed, no one knows how either the collection of Old Testament books or that of the New Testament books was made. Each collection may almost be said to have made itself. The books came together by a process of natural affinity. There was, there is, something in common in the books of law and poetry, of history and fiction, of biography and philosophy, which unites them ; there is in this literature a principle of attraction, of cohesion, which is moral, not mechanical or ecclesiastical. The writings of Moses, of Isaiah, of David, of Paul, of the unknown author of the books of Kings and of the unknown author of the book of Hebrews, have certain characteristics in common, a certain spirit which unifies them in one book. I have said that the Bible is not a book, but a literature ; I will now say that this literature is a book : not merely because its various writings are bound together in one

volume, but because they are animated with one and the same life. It is this life which makes the literature sacred, and the sacredness of the different parts of this literature are exactly proportioned to the measure of this life which they respectively contain. It is least in such a chapter as the 21st chapter of Joshua; it is greatest in such a chapter as the 103d Psalm.

Following this line of thought a little further, I think we can see, if we reflect a little, that the characteristic which unites all this literature in one homogeneous book is promise. It is all a literature of promise. Promise is the golden thread which binds all these books together in one common book. This is the natural affinity which selected and combined in one library these literary remains of fifteen centuries. The Bible is, at least it claims to be, the promise of God to his children, whereby he bestows upon them what otherwise they never could have possessed, for want of knowledge that it was theirs to possess.

This claim is indicated in the titles Old Testament and New Testament. A testament is a covenant or agreement. The Bible is composed of two covenants or agreements, by which God confers upon man that of which otherwise he would know nothing. It is the will and testament by which a Father bequeaths an inheritance to his children. This claim is indicated by its structure. Its first five books are books of law; but all its commandments are commandments

with promise, and to every one is attached the condition, If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. This characteristic of the law is emphasized in the closing chapter of Deuteronomy : "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live." Its historical books are not the record of great national achievements ; they are not the story of the building and the life of a nation ; they are the record of God's fulfilment of his promises to the people of promise and of their failure to fulfil their promises, and of the disastrous results in their national life. The poetical books are also prophetical books, for Hebrew poetry is prophecy: the song of the prophet, whether he is an Isaiah mounting like the lark above the storm into the clear sunlight above, or a Jeremiah singing like the nightingale a song in the night, is always a song of promise.

The life of Christ is the story of the beginning of the fulfilment of promises which had cheered the faithful in the darkest hours of Judea's apostasy and ruin : the letters of Paul are the unfolding of that fulfilment in spiritual experience, ever pointing to a richer and yet richer fulfilment in the ever increasing crescendo movement of the future ; and the literature of promise ends with an apocalyptic vision of the perfecting but never perfected fulfilment in the latter days. If we turn from the structure to the contents of this literature, this promise character is even more apparent

The Bible is like a symphony, weaving endless variations around one simple theme, which, obscure at first, grows stronger and clearer, until finally the whole orchestra takes it up in one magnificent choral, conquering all obstacles and breaking through all hidings. Abraham is beckoned out of the land of idolatry by the finger of promise; Joseph is cheered in danger and in prison by the memory of a dream of promise; Moses is called by promise from his herding in the wilderness to lead a nation of promise out of bondage into a promised land; Joshua is called to his captaincy with reiterated promises; Gideon is inspired for his campaigning by repeated promises; David is sustained in the cave of Adullam, and strengthened in the palace in Jerusalem by promise; from Isaiah to Malachi the note of promise, before broken and fragmentary, sounds without a pause; the shepherds are brought to the Christ by an angelic message of promise; he begins his ministry by a sermon at Nazareth, which is a promise of glad tidings to the poor, and ends it in his ascension with a promise of his return; Paul lives on promise as on manna heaven descended, declaring, in the midst of great tribulations, "We are saved by hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?" and John closes the canon with a book whose glory is like the glory of a setting sun, which promises a clear to-morrow.

The reader must further reflect that this promise character of the Bible is not common to all religious lite-

rature. On the contrary, it is an exclusive characteristic of the Bible. Other religious literature contains aspirations and prayers for blessing, which assume to be revelations of truth and laws emanating from the Deity; but the Bible is the only book, and the Jewish literature is the only literature, which contains promises of gifts not otherwise obtainable, and the record of a restful possession of them in experience. Many another poet has with David thirsted for God as the hart thirsted for the water brooks, but no other has rivalled this experience: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." If it be said that the Koran promises heaven to the Mohammedan, and the Book of Mormon a millennium to the Latter-Day Saints, the answer is that both the Koran and the Book of Mormon were produced long after the Bible, and their promises are only faint reflections of those which the Bible contains. It may be asserted with confidence, and without fear of successful contradiction, that the Bible is the only book which assumes to embody promises of an inheritance about which but for such promise man could not know, and which, therefore, he could not possess.

Having made this statement in a public lecture, a friendly critic, who is far more familiar than I am with the Vedas, questioned whether the statement were not too strong, and sent me, at my request,

some extracts from those ancient hymns, thought to indicate a promise of forgiveness of sins. I give this portion of the letter, with the accompanying extracts, so that the reader may for himself compare the clearest promises of divine mercy to be found in the Vedas with the utterances of David, Isaiah, and Paul :

“ ‘ To Varuna (Greek *οὐρανός*). Whatever command, O God Varuna, as mortals, we have broken day by day, deliver us not up to the deadly weapon of the wicked one nor the wrath of the angry. May we release thy thoughts to forgive us (by our songs), as a charioteer, his steed who is tethered in the broad field. For my longings fly forth to desire for blessing as birds to their nests. When shall we gain for ourselves the far-seeing Lord, Varuna, to favor us ? ’

“ Then follows a beautiful description of Varuna, as the Lord of Nature, knowing the course of the winds, the birds in the air, and the ships of the sea. Then the poet, feeling, as these first verses indicate, the anger of Varuna, who is also Lord of the moral world, and desirous of soothing him, turns again to supplication : ‘ Yearning for the Far-seeing, my thoughts go forth, as cows to their pasture land. Let us speak now together again, since now Agni like a priest receives the sweet drink offered.’

“ ‘ Like a true child of nature,’ so says Max Muller, in comment upon this hymn, ‘ he offers honey, which the god is sure to like, and then appeals to him as to a friend : ‘ Now be good, and let us speak together again.’ ’ This may seem childish, but there is a real and childish faith in it, and, like all childish faith, it is rewarded by some kind of a response. For at that moment the poet takes a higher tone. He fancies he sees the god and his chariot passing by ; he feels that his prayer has been heard. ‘ Now I saw the god who is all visible ; now I behold his chariot above the earth. He must have accepted my prayers.’ ”

“ I have given a very literal rendering, that the turn of the phrase may not imply more than the original permits. In another hymn to this ‘ supreme and mighty Varuna ’ is this prayer : ‘ What great sin is it, Varuna, for which thou seeketh to slay thy worshipper and friend ? Tell me, O unassailable and self-dependent god ! and, freed from sin,

I shall speedily come to thee with adoration. Release us from the sins of our fathers and our own.' This is Muir's rendering. Elsewhere Varuna is said to punish evil-doers, but, in wide benevolence, to be gracious unto the sinner who prays for forgiveness, and to 'untie, like a rope, and remove sin.' "

The only approximation to promise in these extracts, it will be seen, is in the last sentence, and that is rather the expression of a hope than the explicit revelation of a divine promise. Contrast with them such a passage in our Bible as Isaiah i. 18 : "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow ; though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool." The heathen has a longing which itself becomes at last a hope : "He must have accepted my prayers ;" the Hebrew has what purports to be an explicit promise coming direct from his God—a "thus saith the Lord"—as the ground of his confident assurance in a divine forgiveness. The reader should remember that I am not arguing that this promise does come from God ; that is a question to be considered hereafter ; I am only pointing out that the Bible claims to be the book of God's promise ; that in this claim it is peculiar ; that it embodies on almost every page, and woven into its very structure, what purport to be divine promises ; and that in this respect it differs from all pagan religious literatures the world over. To believe in the Bible is to believe that the claim which the Bible thus makes for itself is true ; that it is the promise of God ; that it embodies his

will and purpose concerning his children ; that we can rely upon its assertions, and enter into the inheritance which it claims to bequeath to us. This is what we mean by declaring that the Bible is the Word of God ; not that it consists of God's words, as dictated by him, that it is written by his amanuenses ; but that it is his promise. When we say that we believe in God's Word, we mean that we trust in it as his promise.

To believe in the Bible is not, then, to believe that any particular books were written by any particular authors, as that Deuteronomy was written by Moses, Daniel by the prophet Daniel, or 2 Peter by the Apostle Peter. One may believe, with Robertson Smith, that Deuteronomy was written long after the death of Moses ; with Dean Plumptre, that Ecclesiastes was written by an unknown author in the second or third centuries before Christ ; with Dean Stanley, that there were two Isaiahs, whose productions are combined in the one book of Isaiah ; and yet he may believe in the Bible as heartily as if he believed that Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch, Daniel the book of Daniel, Solomon the book of Ecclesiastes, and the one Isaiah the book which bears his name. Questions of authorship are literary questions, not religious questions ; and the value of the Bible as a literature which embodies the promise of God does not in the least depend upon them. The authority of a will does not depend upon the lawyer

or lawyer's clerk who drafted it; nor does the authority of the Bible depend upon the human scriveners who reduced its promises to writing. Nor does belief in the Bible involve belief in any particular theory of inspiration, or in any claim, orthodox or otherwise, made for it. This is to believe in the theory, not in the Bible itself. Whether, to continue the figure, the father drafts the will himself with his own hand, or dictates its provisions to a copyist, or gives a written memorandum of his instructions to his solicitor, or simply verbally tells him how he wishes the estate disposed of, is a question wholly immaterial in determining the validity of the will itself. That depends upon one question and one only: whether the document expresses in a legal manner the will and purpose of the one who had a right to bestow the property. Whether God dictated the Bible word for word, or brooded over the spirit of his chosen ones until they caught the divine purpose by spiritual contact and were able to interpret it, is a question wholly unnecessary to determine in determining whether the Bible is God's Word or not. Our only question is, Does the Bible really represent the will and purpose of God toward his children? If it does, the question by what hands that will was recorded, and the question by what psychological method it was communicated to the penman who interpreted it, is wholly immaterial.

I do not, therefore, attempt to give a categorical

reply to my correspondent's inquiries. The question of the authorship of 2 Peter, of the canonicity of Solomon's Song and Esther, of the authenticity of the last eleven verses of the Gospel of Mark or the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter of John, are for the most part purely literary questions, to be determined as the questions respecting the authorship of doubtful orations of Cicero or of Dialogues of Plato are to be determined. Doubt concerning them does not involve in doubt the main question. That question is, Shall we believe that the Bible is what it claims to be? Shall we believe that this literature really embodies the promise of God to his children? Can we fulfil the conditions and rely upon the covenant? When I read in Isaiah, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," can I trust that as God's promise, and be sure that my sins are forgiven, and I have no need longer to bear the burden of them? Or is this only what an old Hebrew poet thought about it? When I am wearied with the labors of my profession, when my burden grows heavier than I can bear, when I cannot endure the responsibilities which I have not sought, and yet cannot lay aside, and I hear a voice saying to me, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," can I believe it, and come, and find rest, and, like David, lay me down in peace and sleep? or is this only what

the son of the Galilean carpenter thought about it? There is no question more worthy of serious consideration than this of careful pondering, of wise judging. If the Bible is not what it pretends to be, if its promises of rest and strength and guidance and comfort and forgiveness are only the hopes of mortals self-wrought for self-comfort, not promises God-given to God's children, the delusion ought to be exposed and the happy dreamers awakened from their dreams. For the sternest truth is better than the most delicious falsehood. If the Bible is what it pretends to be, if its promises are God's promises, not merely man's hopes, if it can be trusted in the darkness for light, in sorrow for comfort, in weakness for strength, in despair for hope, no knowledge is worth more to human souls than the knowledge which it brings them. I believe that the Bible is what it claims to be, the Word of God; that its promises, binding together in one harmonious whole this various literature, are God's promises, and can be safely and surely trusted. The reason why I believe this I reserve for a future chapter.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE EARTHLY INHERITANCE.

THE reasons assigned in books on the evidences of Christianity are not reasons upon which the faith of most Christians in the Bible really depends. If any one doubts this assertion let him try the following experiment: let him submit any ordinarily intelligent lay Christian to an examination on the evidences of Christianity, and see how good an account he can give of that branch of theology. The grounds of Christian faith in the Bible are not chiefly intellectual: they are in experience, not in philosophy. I do not propose in this article to attempt to restate the intellectual argument, though I recognize its validity; but following the general course of thought pursued throughout these chapters, I shall try to indicate the reasons in experience for the Christian's faith in the Christian's Bible—reasons of equal validity with the uneducated and the educated, with those who can state them and with those who only feel them without being able to analyze them.

I have said that the Bible claims to be the book of God's promise to his children, and that to believe in

the Bible is to believe, not in any particular authorship of particular books, nor in any particular theories of inspiration, but to believe that its promises are really God's promises, and can be relied upon. All Christians, whatever their opinions about the authorship of Deuteronomy, Daniel, Ecclesiastes, or the Fourth Gospel, whatever their theories of inspiration, believe this, and the real ground of their belief appears to me to be the fact that we are living in the age of the fulfilment of these promises. We have no need to go back to questions respecting the original authentication of the will, because it has passed probate, and the inheritance has been turned over to us. I can best make my meaning clear by specific illustrations.

The first thing which this will or testament bestows upon the children of God is supremacy over nature. The command in the first chapter of Genesis is a promise: "Replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." The reader must recollect that this promise was given at a time when none of those who listened to it believed that any such supremacy belonged to mankind. It was given—to go no further back—through Moses to the just emancipated children of Israel, at the foot of Mount Sinai. They had been educated under a religion which inculcated nature worship. They had been taught in Egypt to believe

that the sun was a god, the moon was a god, the stars were gods, the river Nile was a god, the cattle that browsed along its bank, the crocodiles that burrowed in its mud and hid themselves among its flags, were gods. The world was deified ; man was its serf and its worshipper. The first message of revelation reversed this teaching. "These are not your gods," was its message to mankind. "Your God in the beginning made the sun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night ; he made the earth and the cattle that feed upon it, the river and the creeping things that hide under its banks ; he walks upon the wings of the winds, and the lightnings are his arrows, and he has made you, serf and slave that you have been, in his image, and gives you the sun and the moon and the stars, and the river, and the cattle, and the creeping things, and all that you have accepted as your gods and have worshipped in fear and served in trembling, to be your serfs. Replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." The secret of all modern science is in the first chapter of Genesis ; at the sound of this message superstition shrivels up and shrinks away. So long as men believed the cow to be a divinity, how could they kill and eat her ? So long as they believed the light to be a thunderbolt of Jove, how dare they catch it and set it to their service ? Belief in the dominion of spirit over matter, of mind

over nature, of man over the physical and the animal creation, was essential to the possession of that dominion.

Surely no one now doubts the truth of this promise. He may doubt whether God gave it, whether Moses received it, whether it dates from the fifteenth century before Christ; but he does not doubt that the dominion is his. That dominion is no longer an anticipation, it is a fact; it is no longer a prophecy, it is history. Not strong of limb, we cage the lion, and make the elephant do our bidding; not fleet of foot, we outstrip the gazelle, and run across the continent by day and night without a pause and without fatigue; without a fin we swim the ocean, and arrive upon the other shore rested, not wearied, by our journey; the fire and water, which the ancients worshiped, we marry, and their child, steam, we compel to do our drudgery for us; the thunderbolts of Jove, before which they trembled, we catch and tame as carrier pigeons to carry our messages round the world.

Next among the promises of this literature of promise is that of peace and good government founded upon general intelligence and general virtue. It is prominent throughout the Old Testament; it reappears, though in less prominence, dimmed there by the promise of even better things, in the New Testament. A single typical promise may serve as an illustration of its class. I quote from Isaiah ii. 3, 4: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the

Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people ; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

If the reader will analyze this promise he will see that it contains the three civic blessings which are elsewhere in the Old Testament promised separately; first, universal education and an enlightened conscience; second, peace ; third, productive industry. If he will further reflect, he will perceive, too, that this promise was made at a time when its fulfilment must have seemed beyond the bounds of possibility. The promises of the Bible always transcend the rational expectation of the times.

The earliest social organization is the family : the earliest government is the patriarchal.<sup>1</sup> Abraham was

<sup>1</sup> That which has always seemed clear to readers of the Bible is recognized as unquestionably true by such writers as Sir Henry Maine and Herbert Spencer. I quote a single paragraph from the former author : "The effect of the evidence derived from comparative jurisprudence is to establish that view of the primeval condition of the human race which is known as the Patriarchal Theory. There is no doubt, of course, that this theory was originally based on the Scriptural history of the Hebrew patriarchs in Lower Asia ; but, as has been explained already, its connection with Scripture rather militated than otherwise against its reception as a complete theory, since the majority

President, Senate, House of Representatives, Supreme Court, High Priest and Preacher, and Public School Superintendent for his little empire. These families, involved in constant rivalries and contentions, were gradually amalgamated in tribes, with a very loose organization, and still preserved the patriarchal type. The elder, or Sheikh, was the father of his people, and the relation between him and the tribe was a modified form of the parental one. These tribes were engaged in constant warfare with one another, and gradually combined in a *quasi* military organization, now for aggressive warfare, now for defence against the aggressions of another. This was the historic origin of nationality. Such national communities were at first, and for a long time, purely military organizations. Their object was warfare, offensive or defensive. Agriculture—the only form of early industry—was relegated to women or slaves, or a

of the inquirers who till recently addressed themselves with most earnestness to the colligation of social phenomena were either influenced by the strongest prejudice against Hebrew antiquities or by the strongest desire to construct their system without the assistance of religious records. Even now there is, perhaps, a disposition to undervalue these accounts, or rather to decline generalizing from them, as forming part of the traditions of a Semitic people. It is to be noted, however, that the legal testimony comes nearly exclusively from the institutions of societies belonging to the Indo-European stock, the Romans, Hindus, and Sclavonians supplying the greater part of it; and, indeed, the difficulty, at the present stage of the inquiry, is to know where to stop; to say of what races of men it is *not* allowable to lay down that the society in which they are united was originally organized on the patriarchal model." (See "Ancient Law;" by Sir Henry Maine; pp. 118, 119.)

distinctly lower social order. The chief, or king, or emperor, or tsar, whatever his official designation might be, was a commander-in-chief, not only of the military, but also of the non-military forces; to him absolute obedience was due, in his hands was the power of life and death over all his subjects. A military organization cannot be democratic; and until the close of the Middle Ages every nation was a military organization, and therefore every nation was unconcealedly despotic. There were occasional attempts at freedom; but all such attempts prior to education and pacific organization were necessarily and inevitably failures.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Fulfilment of these requirements, that there shall be complete corporate action, that to this end the non-combatant part shall be occupied in providing for the combatant part, that the entire aggregate shall be strongly bound together, and that the units composing it must have their individualities in life, liberty, and property thereby subordinated, pre-supposes a coercive instrumentality. No such union for corporate action can be achieved without a powerful controlling agency. On remembering the fatal results caused by divisions of counsels in war, or by separation into factions in face of an enemy, we see that chronic militancy tends to develop a despotism; since, other things being equal, those societies will habitually survive in which, by its aid, the corporate action is made complete. And this involves a system of centralization. The trait made familiar to us by an army, in which, under a commander-in-chief, there are secondary commanders over large masses, and so on down to the ultimate divisions, must characterize the social organization at large. A militant society requires a regulative structure of this kind, since otherwise its corporate action cannot be made most effectual. Without such grades of governing centres diffused throughout the non-combatant part as well as the combatant part, the entire forces of the aggregate cannot be promptly put forth. Unless the workers are under a control akin to that

At a time, then, when all political organizations were not only military in their aim and in their structure, but were required by the necessities of their existence to be so, when every nation was organized for warfare, aggressive or defensive, and therefore was necessarily despotic, when the only authority recognized among men was the authority of a superior force, when absolute authority and military equipment were requisite conditions of national life, there arose in one comparatively small nation a line of poet-teachers who declared that the time would come when education would be universal, when law would have no other enforcement than reverence for conscience and for God, when military equipment would be laid aside, when the ignoble pursuits of peaceful industry would take the place of the honored profession of war, when swords would be turned into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, and when men would no longer be trained to the arts of war. The promise was made nearly 2,000 years before the world can be said to have seen even the beginning of the fulfilment of the

which the fighters are under, their indirect aid cannot be insured in full amount and with due quickness. And this is the form of a society characterized by *status*—a society the members of which stand one toward another in successive grades of subordination. From the despot down to the slave all are masters of those below, and subjects of those above. The relation of the child to the father, of the father to some superior, and so on up to the absolute head, is one in which the individual of lower status is at the mercy of one of higher status." "Political Institutions," p. 662. —Herbert Spencer.

prediction, before even the possibility of its attainment dawned upon political organizations or philosophic thinkers.

But to-day he must be dull indeed who doubts the promise, who doubts, to employ the philosophic phraseology into which Herbert Spencer has unconsciously converted the glowing poetry of Isaiah, that, the "industrial type of society" is destined to supplant the "militant type of society." We believe that this promise of peace and good government is the promise of God, because we live in the age of its fulfilment. We live in a country in which education is at least in theory universal, and in which, except in a few of the great cities, and in the Southern States, which have not yet recovered from the blighting effects of a despotic form of society followed by a devastating war, that theory is measurably well realized in practice. In every village are the school-house and the church, keeping pace with the railroad, the telegraph office, and the warehouse—the school-house our guarantee that religion will not degenerate into superstition, the church our pledge that education will not degenerate into atheism and irreligion. Forty separate nations are united in one, with a chosen arbitrator to settle all disputes between them. The mail-clad warrior has long since disappeared; the pistol and the bowie-knife are known only in frontier settlements, and are disappearing even there. Even our policemen for the most part

are armed only with a club; the star and uniform, insignia of authority, are ordinarily sufficient to quell resistance. Our army is a living skeleton, and our navy a dead one. The law goes out of Zion, and the nation depends for its peace and security, not on sword and spear, not on army or police, but on the educated conscience and the enlightened self-interest of her people. The only army is the army of preachers and school-teachers. She learns war no more; she studies only the arts of peace and of productive industry.

One may question whether the second chapter of Isaiah was written by the same poet who wrote the fifty-fifth; he may doubt the orthodox theory of inspiration, if he can find out what it is; he may have one of his own, or may even do tolerably well without a theory; but it is difficult to see how, living in the United States of America in this nineteenth century, he can doubt that he is living in a country where education is general and prospectively universal, where law is enforced by conscience, not by armed forces, where military equipment has given place to industrial equipment, where arts are pacific, not warlike; in brief, in a country whose restraining forces are the church and the schoolhouse, not the sword, and whose aim is production, not war. Nor, if he reflects on the condition of the world at the time those promises of peace, freedom, education, and good government were made, which Isaiah has so

tersely summed up in a single sentence, is it easy to see how he can doubt that the vision and the promise came from the God, whose guidance has led the nations of the earth up to its fulfilment.

It must be added, in completing our view of this branch of the subject, that not only are supremacy over nature, and peace, and good government promised by the Bible as a part of God's bequest to his children, not only were these promises made at a time when, and to a people to whom, the fulfilment seemed so absolutely incredulous that there is abundant evidence that they did not grasp the significance of the promises, but even now, in our own time, the fulfilment of these promises is practically confined to what are known as Bible lands. Civilization is very often accredited somewhat vaguely to the nineteenth century. But the nineteenth century exists in Africa, in India, in China, as well as in Europe and America, though the peoples who dwell there have no more of modern civilization than they had received from Christian Europe and America. We are not accustomed to think of railroads, telegraphs, insurance companies, banking, and the credit system as Christian institutions, but they are wholly confined to Christian lands. No railroad has ever been built, or telegraph constructed, or insurance business organized, or banking system formed, or great credit system instituted outside of Christian nationalities, unless it has been imported from Christian nationali-

ties. Even so necessary an adjunct of modern civilization as the post-office was wholly unknown to the ancients, and is wholly unknown to the moderns, except as Christian people have established it, or pagan nations have borrowed it from them. And even its transplantation from Christian to pagan soils has been attended with great difficulties. Some years ago the Shah of Persia, returning from England to his native land, undertook to inaugurate a post-office system there. But the fundamental conditions of honesty were wanting; he was obliged to abandon the effort, and I do not think it has ever been attempted again. As to freedom, peace, and good government, they are absolutely unknown outside of Christendom, and very imperfectly known, even inside of Christendom. China has been swept with war as forests by fire; India is kept in tolerably peaceful condition only because in subjection to the dominant Englishman; and the state of Africa is still a state of chronic war between tribes whose relations of amity to each other are not much superior to those maintained by the lions and other beasts of the African wilds. If the reader will put in imagination a map of the world in Mercator's projection before him, if he will paint in light colors the civilized lands, shading off into darker and yet darker colors until he reaches those which possess neither national, political nor industrial civilization, but live in a state of nature, he will find in his map a visible illustration of the

fact that supremacy over nature, and peace, and good government are the productions as well as the promises of the Bible. He will find protestant England and America dotted over with schoolhouses, netted over with railroads and telegraphs, resounding with the music of industry, with wealth far too unequally distributed, but yet far more equally distributed than in any other lands, with armies relatively insignificant, and a public sentiment wholly averse to war. As he crosses the channel into Roman Catholic France and Spain and Italy, he will find his map beginning to assume a grayish tint, with lighter shades in the protestant portion of Germany; as he travels eastward, he will find it growing darker and darker, until in China and India, except where western Christianity and western civilization have somewhat lighted up the darkness, he will find the ignorant stolidity and superstition of the common people what it was in the days of Confucius and Buddha, the means of intercommunication unchanged, the forms of trade the same, equipment of industry no better, the burdens of a despotic government no lighter; and Africa will be as black as when the Pharaohs pushed their conquests southward toward the equator, powerful to subdue, but powerless to civilize, the equatorial tribes.

I must leave to the closing chapter a consideration of those promises which concern the spiritual life, which

therefore constitute the most sacred inheritance of the children of promise, and the enjoyment of which constitutes the most solid ground of their faith in the Book of Promise which has bestowed that inheritance upon them. They are all involved in and grow out of the promise of God that he will make his tabernacle with men and fill them with his fullness, the consummate promise of his will and testament, possession of which is that eternal life which begins on earth and ends never. But before we consider that gift which makes us partakers of the divine nature, it will be well to consider two doctrines which are a stumbling block to many students of the religious problem—the Resurrection of the Body and Eternal Death.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

I HAVE somewhere seen a cartoon of the resurrection, which doubtless fairly represented the conception of that event entertained in the Middle Ages. Here a head is just peeping above the ground; here a fully raised body is stretching itself in the sunlight after its long night; here a husband is helping his wife out of her earthly bed. If I wanted to eradicate from Christian consciousness the unscientific and unspiritual faith in a literal bodily resurrection, I would reproduce this picture for general circulation. For unspiritual faiths need generally only to be patterned to the eye in order to be rejected both by the understanding and the emotions. It cannot be said that this belief is eliminated from Christian belief or is harmless in Christian life. The conception of many a mother at the grave of her child still finds its expression in the beautiful verse, but false sentiment, of Henry Kirke White:

“This ashes, too, this little dust,  
A Father’s care shall keep,  
Till the last trump shall sound and break  
The long and dreary sleep.”

Within the present decade a Presbyterian clergyman, whose loyalty to Christ as a Divine Saviour was not called in question, was ejected from the Presbytery, and one count in the indictment against him was that he repudiated this pagan dogma, which materialism has grafted on the spiritual faith inculcated by the New Testament. The Christian friend who said to me a few years ago, half seriously, half in jest, "If we substitute cremation for burial, what becomes of the resurrection of the body?" gave expression to a real, though not often avowed, sentiment, one which is the secret of the religious antagonism to that method of disposing of the tenantless body. We no longer embalm our dead, in a vain endeavor to preserve a ghastly caricature of our beloved against the day of resurrection; but we still do what little we can to thwart the kind ministry of Nature, which, if we would let her, would dissolve this earthly into its earthy elements, and give to it its only resurrection in grass and fruit and waving grain and fragrant flowers. We inclose it in our caskets, double-box it, and lay it away to poison the earth which it should fructify, and to retain a ghastly semblance of its old self when it should be converted into new forms of use and beauty.

A few years ago a society was formed in England to promote basket-burial—the laying of the corpse in an open wicker basket, protected from the soil only by a light covering, and given to Mother Earth to incorporate into herself without hindrance and delay. But

I do not think it made much headway against popular feeling. Reason had nothing to say against it; but fashion and sentiment, though dumb, were powerful, and were re-enforced by that materialism which identifies personality with flesh and blood, and conceives that the man ceases to be because he has struck his tent and moved away. Basket-burial is still unknown in the United States, and exceptional in Great Britain. When I die, may no iron door be closed against kindly Nature's endeavor—fulfilling the blessed ministry with which her God and mine has commissioned her—to turn again into life and life-giving elements this perishing body; may no love linger on the grave; may no aching hearts be buried with the body beneath the clod; may no false imaginations sorrow as without hope over "the long and dreary sleep." May the good angel be seen and heard that ever repeats from every open grave, "He is not here; why seek ye the living among the dead?" May the entombment be a willing resignation of dust to dust, and ashes to ashes, while the soul ascends to God who gave it.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead. I do not believe in the resurrection of the body.

In the outset, let me say that my faith, both in what it asserts and what it denies, rests *wholly upon Scripture*. I have no faith in any guesses about the future nor in any philosophical conclusions, expressed in such forms as, We must suppose, or, we must be-

lieve; nor in any mere deductions of feelings expressed in such phrases as, I cannot bear the thought, etc. All that we know or can know about the resurrection is to be gathered by a reverent study of Revelation. What such a study will not teach us we must be content to leave unknown. There is, perhaps, no objection to our going on to imagine; but it is important for us to distinguish between what we imagine and what God has taught us.

I have said that I do not believe in the resurrection of the body; because I think it is clearly, explicitly, and vigorously repudiated by the Word of God. To make clear what I mean by the phrase resurrection of the body, I turn to some of the creeds of Christendom and express my dissent from them.

I find in the Westminster Confession of Faith the declaration: "All the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever." I do not believe that they will rise with the self-same bodies; on the contrary, I believe this body has done all that God means it to do when its earthly career has ended, and that God will give to its owner a new body as it pleaseth him. I find in the Shorter Catechism the declaration: "Their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." I do not believe that they rest in their graves till the resurrection; I believe that those bodies pass into grass and trees

and flowers, into new forms of terrestrial use and beauty, and that every attempt to keep them in their graves, whether by the ancient embalming or the modern casket, is fighting against Nature and against Nature's God. I find in the Thirty-nine Articles the declaration concerning Christ: "Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature: wherewith he ascended into heaven." I believe that Christ did truly rise from death; but I do not believe that he took his body, flesh and bones, into heaven. I believe that before the ascension his material body underwent the change which Paul foretells for those who are living at the coming of Christ; I believe that Christ is a Spirit, and I believe his own declaration to his disciples after his resurrection: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." I believe flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. I believe it is no part of the perfection of man's nature, but his temporary instrument, admirably adapted to his state of pilgrimage, utterly unadapted to his eternal home. And I believe this, as I have said, on what seems to me to be the clear teaching of God's Holy Word.

The belief that "the bodies do rest in their graves till the resurrection," is contradicted by our daily observation; we see them exhumed from their graves by the irresistible and blessed power of Nature: we see them absorbed and transformed into

new forms of beauty and of life; we see them wasted on the wings of the wind as dust. Gathered together again for resurrection they may be, by some fiat of the Almighty; rest in their graves till the resurrection they evidently do not. This is not, however, the gravamen of my charge against this doctrine. If it were simply an impossible imagination, I would let it rest undisturbed by voice or pen of mine. But the doctrine that Christ ascended into heaven with flesh and bones, the doctrine that the dead rise at the last day with the "self-same bodies and none other," I believe to be a graft of paganism budded with many another pagan notion on Christian theology. Its seeds are to be found in the tombs of Egypt, not in the grave of Christ; it is a prolific source of false doctrine and cruel comfort; it carries with it the notion of a physical heaven and a physical hell; it has given rise to a doctrine of purgatory and all the priestly machinery that accompanies it; it buries the heart of the afflicted in the grave; it postpones hope to a remote and indefinite future; it habituates us, in the hours when we stand consciously nearest eternity, not to look with Paul upon the things that are unseen and eternal, but with the pagan upon the things that are seen and temporal. It is irrational, it is unscriptural, it is unspiritual.

If this doctrine is a Scriptural doctrine it ought to be expressed in clear, explicit terms. It is not. The phrase "resurrection of the body" does not occur in

Scripture. The dogma is not so much as named. It rests, so far as it rests on specific texts of Scripture at all, on such passages as Job's exclamation, " Yet in my flesh shall I see God," which the Hebrew scholars tell us should be rendered, " Though my skin (last remnant of the body) is destroyed, yet without my flesh shall I see God ;" or on Scripture accounts of miraculous resurrections, as of Lazarus or the saints at the death of Christ, of whose ascension into the heavens with their material bodies there is not a hint in the Scripture narrative ; or on the resurrection of Christ, who distinctly declares that he is not clothed upon with his spiritual body, but has flesh and bones which the spirits have not; or upon imaginary texts of Scripture, which have no existence, such as " The graves shall be opened;" <sup>1</sup> or upon texts of Scripture whose implication is the very reverse of the doctrine of a material resurrection and a material body, as Christ's colloquy with the Sadducees, in which he tells them that the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob is the God not of the dead but of the living, and that the children of the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels; or it is based on long-drawn deductions from pictorial

<sup>1</sup> The only text which gives any color to this common, bald, erroneous citation is Ezekiel xxxvii. 12 : " I will open your graves," words uttered by Ezekiel in a vision to the valley of dry bones, and having no reference whatever to the Last Day, or General Judgment, or General Resurrection.

and parabolic teachings of Scripture, enforcing the resurrection not of the body but of the dead.

While the Scriptural grounds for the belief that the body rests in the grave until the resurrection, and that then "the self-same body and no other" rises from the grave, are so singularly inapposite, the teaching of the one passage of Scripture which bears directly upon this subject is clear, definite, and explicit in condemnation of it. In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, Paul labors with reiterated antithesis to clear the Church of Christ of this relic of pagan materialism. The body you sow in the grave is not the body that shall be. God will furnish a body as it pleaseth him. The celestial body is different from the terrestrial body. The natural body is different from the spiritual body. One is corruptible, the other incorruptible; one is mortal, the other immortal. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Corruption cannot inherit incorruption. Even the living at the last great day must be changed; must drop the corruptible for the incorruptible; must drop the mortal for the immortal. Let any of my readers do his best to express repudiation of the doctrine that "the self-same body" will rise, and then compare his repudiation with Paul's, and I venture to say that he will not have done it with half the vigor and power of the Apostle. When I think what he has written on this subject, I am almost ashamed to let my feebler words be printed.

What, then, does Paul mean by the resurrection of the dead, or the resurrection *from* the dead—for this is apparently the more favorite form of expression? It is resurrection *from* the dead which they that are accounted worthy obtain; it is resurrection *from* the dead which constitutes the theme of the early Apostolic preaching; it is resurrection *from* the dead to attain which Paul follows after Christ so earnestly.<sup>1</sup> I disbelieve in the resurrection of the “self-same body;” I believe with all my heart in the resurrection *from* the dead. What do I mean? What did Paul mean?

The ancients believed that the dead went down into a dark under-world, an abode of departed spirits, a shadowy prison-house, a Sheol, a Hades, a Place of the Dead. Homer makes the dead Achilles declare:

“I would be  
A laborer on earth and serve for hire  
Some man of mean estate, who makes scant cheer,  
Rather than reign over all who have gone down to death.”

In reflecting upon this dark abode, even the faith and hope of the most pious Hebrew was dimmed and darkened. “Wilt thou show wonders to the dead?” he cried. “Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy righteousness be known in the land of forgetfulness?” For a picture of this Land of the Dead, read

<sup>1</sup> αναστάσις ἐκ νεκρῶν. Luke xx. 35; Acts iv. 2; Phil. iii. 10.

the ode in Isaiah on the descent of the King of Babylon into Sheol :

"Sheol beneath is in commotion for thee,  
To meet thine entrance :  
It nurseth for thee the deceased, all the leaders of the earth :  
It causeth to rise from their thrones all the kings of the nations.  
They all commence and say to thee :  
Art thou, too, become weak as we are ?  
Art thou become like unto us ?  
Thy pomp is brought down to Sheol,  
And the sounding of thy harps :  
Under thee is spread putridity,  
And the worms are thy covering.  
How thou art fallen from heaven,  
Illustrious Son of the Morning !  
How thou art felled to the ground,  
That didst discomfit the nations !'" <sup>1</sup>

Such was the almost universal conception of death and the Abode of the Dead at the time when the New Testament was written : Death an enemy ; the Abode of the Dead a prison-house, a dark and shadowy Underworld, in which Death holds his prisoners in captivity. To such a faith the New Testament speaks its words of hope. It declares that Christ has conquered Death. It never speaks of resurrection from the grave, but it promises a resurrection from the dead, a deliverance from Hades, a ransom from the Underworld. It never suggests that the graves shall be opened or the bodies which have crumbled there to dust shall be raised therefrom ; it declares that Sheol shall be opened and deliver up its captives.

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xiv. 9, 12. Henderson's Translation.

"The sea gave up the dead that were in it ; and death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them ; and they were judged every man according to their works." This picture in Revelation interprets the New Testament declarations of the resurrection from the dead. Christ has led captivity captive. He has broken open the doors of this dark Underworld and led its prisoners forth. Against his church the gates of this prison-house of death shall not prevail ; for his redeemed shall rise from the Place of Death, whose gates He, like a spiritual Samson, will have lifted from their place, not merely to escape himself but to give deliverance to redeemed humanity.<sup>1</sup>

This procession of the redeemed he leads forth in magnificent array, in cohorts, each in his own rank and order, coming forth at his shout of command, at the sound of his trumpet, at his appearing, at the Last Day. How far we are justified in giving a literal interpretation of the pictorial and parabolic language in which are described this resurrection of the dead from the Underworld, and the awful and solemn scenes which accompany it, I do not pretend to judge. The pictorial significance must have been clearer to the ancients than it is to us. The last trump suggest-

<sup>1</sup> There is but one verse in the Bible which even suggests a future coming forth from the grave, namely, John v. 28, 29 ; and the interpretation of this verse, taken with the one almost immediately preceding, "The hour is coming, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear," is confessedly not clear : on the other hand, Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, evidently treats the "resurrection of the dead" and the being "made alive" as synonymous terms.

ed to the devout Jew what it fails to suggest to us ; for it was at the sound of the silver trumpets that the Great Congregation broke up its camp, or gathered to hear the instructions of Moses, or to receive the law of God. The last trump to the Jew was as the last ringing of the school-bell to a modern pupil, or the last roll call of the drum to a modern soldier. It signified the end of the school ; the close of the pilgrimage ; the completion of the campaign. But whether that trumpet has already sounded, and the Day of Great Assize has already begun, and the dead go up from their death-bed to stand before their Judge ; or whether it is yet to sound out to all the human race, and from some resting-place—but not the grave—the dead are to come forth, the children of Christ to share his throne with him, they who have never known him to be judged by him—I do not attempt here even to consider. Whatever significance may be given to the magnificent imagery in which these awful realities are shadowed forth to us, there is nothing in them to indicate either that the body “rests in the grave,” or that “the self-same body” rises out of it again.

But for myself, I do not believe that for the children of God there is any dark Underworld, any Place of the Dead, any Hades, any Intermediate State. I read in the language of the New Testament, not an indorsement of this belief, but a correction of it. I believe that he who has found Christ has found eter-

nal life ; that he has passed from death unto life ; that he will not come into judgment ; that when he departs, it is to be with Christ ; that when Christ comes, he will come with him in glory ; that when Christ judges the world, he will sit with him on his judgment throne ; that he who liveth and believeth in Christ can never die ; death hath no dominion over him. Martha still weeps at the grave of her dead brother, vainly attempting to assuage her grief by the remote hope that "he shall rise again in the resurrection at the Last Day ;" Christ still stands beside her, unrecognized through her tears, and says to her : "I am the Resurrection and the Life ; he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

But if there be no resurrection of the body, how shall I recognize those whom I have known on earth ? Identity is not physical, nor is recognition dependent on the body. The man is identical with the child ; but the man's body is not identical with the child's body. Identity lies in the spirit, not in the body. The body which is seen is temporal ; the spirit which is unseen is eternal. And recognition, though often through the body, is by the spirit. Did not Christ recognize Moses and Elijah in the Mount ? Yes ; but how ? It was by spiritual, not by sensuous, cognition, he could alone have recognized them ; that spiritual cognition of which, even in our dull, fleshy lives, we get now and then some glimpses in a recognition, despite the mask which

age or sickness has put upon a friend long separated from us.

That we are to be not unclothed, but clothed upon; that we are to have a glorious body, a spiritual body, a celestial body, a body redeemed from all suffering and sensuous temptation and fleshly sin, all that belongs to flesh and blood, seems to me to be at once the clear revelation of Scripture and the reasonable expectation of every child of God; for has not our Father taught us, by the wonderful provisions which he has made for our pilgrimage, to expect still greater things in our Home? That this incorruptible body may have some now uncomprehended and incomprehensible relation to the physical, earthy, sensuous, decaying tabernacle of our pilgrimage, I see neither reason to affirm nor to deny. Whether God gives us a new garment in place of an old one cast aside, or whether he evolves it out of the cast-off garment, as the pure white paper is evolved from the unkempt rags, or the radiant flower from the decaying seed, I do not know, and I am not curious to know. If any one likes to think the latter, and to find in Paul's figure of the seed some ground for this opinion, and in this opinion some justification for repeating the traditional utterance of the creed, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," I have no dispute with him. But for myself, whenever I join with my brethren in repeating that sublime symbol of the faith of the Holy Catholic

Church, the Apostles' Creed, I always substitute for the unscriptural phrase, "The resurrection of the body," this other, the warrant for which both Christ and Paul furnish to the believer:

"I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD."

## CHAPTER XV.

### ETERNAL DEATH.

THE problem of the future is approached by men of every school, who are sure what God will do, who even assert with assurance what he must do. To me it is shrouded in mystery; I approach it with awe; I cannot assert what God will do, still less what he ought to do; I understand too little this awful mystery of sin. What it is, what its nature, whence its origin, what is the ever-shifting line which separates between crime and disease, what almighty love can do for the deliberately, persistently wicked, what all-wise justice must do for the protection of the innocent, what possibilities of redemption there are in any human soul, what reserves of mercy in God's omnipotent love, what awful power there is in the human soul to reject all love, even the love of the Almighty, what limits there are to the power of love, even the omnipotent love of God—all this I know not, and not knowing I cannot dogmatize; I cannot be sure. I look out into the great unknown future with beating heart in silence, and I fear, and hope, and wonder.

Many Christians regard the Bible as a clear and

comprehensive revelation concerning God and divine government, which contains the whole truth concerning him and his purposes, so that, humbly studied and heartily believed, it will furnish a complete science of God and divine things. I do not so understand the Bible. It appears to me to be simply a book of practical directions for godly living in this present life. It tells enough about God to draw out the heart in love toward him, enough about his will to enable us to show our love by our obedience, enough about the future to furnish motives of hope and fear to re-enforce the larger motive of love. We sail upon an ocean whose further bounds are far beyond our sight. The Bible gives every soul a course to sail by. Follow this course, it says, and you will reach the harbor; follow any other, and you will come to shipwreck. But what that harbor is, and what possibilities of rescue at the last from shipwreck there may be, it tells not. The wise father neither promises nor threatens; he leaves his children to understand that obedience brings happiness, disobedience suffering. God governs his children as a wise father; and to all our questionings—What pay for doing right? What penalty for doing wrong?—keeps a silence that is more eloquent than speech. The Bible contains no clear revelation respecting the nature of either eternal life or eternal death. It discloses nothing to curiosity. We gather from its intimations some probable conclusions; but every kind of dogma-

tism respecting the eternal future is un-scriptural. Not till the church furnishes a prophet who can foretell the rewards of virtue or the penalties of sin which God will award to a single individual next year, shall I accept the foretellings of its would-be prophets concerning the rewards and penalties which he will award at the farther end of eternity.

The Scriptures, especially the New Testament, do, however, contain intimations addressed to both fear and hope : the one seem to me to awaken well-grounded fear of a hopeless doom, the other well-grounded hope of a perfected redemption.

It is impossible, within the compass of a brief chapter in such a book as this, to group the words of Christ and his Apostles which foreshadow the awful fact that sin is sometimes incorrigible ; that it is within the power of the human will to set at defiance the divine love ; that a human will, set to do evil, can resist all the gracious influences of a divine will seeking to save the soul from its own undoing. If I were a John-Calvin Calvinist, I should be a Universalist. If I believed that it is in the power of God to coerce a virtuous choice from a free moral agent, I should be sure that he would. A study of life and a study of Scripture both forbid. God influences, but does not compel; he entreats, but does not coerce; he knocks at the heart, but will not break in ; he will have children, not slaves ; love, not obedience. And love is not compelled and cannot be. If he is a Father, he

will receive every child that love can draw and sorrow can drive to him: but he will not go after the fugitive with bloodhounds and bring him back in chains. This seems to me the teaching of the New Testament, especially the teaching of Christ himself. He is not a Master, come to capture by force men who have no choice; he is a Friend, come to capture by persuasion men who have a fatal power to resist, and whose resistance is soul-suicide, eternal death. This terrible fact—man's power of resistance to all gracious influences—underlies all Christ's life and teachings, his arguments, entreaties, persuasions; his incarnation, his tears, his nights of prayer, his Gethsemane agony, his breaking heart, his tragic death, his descent into Hades in merciful quest of the lost, his resurrection, his perpetual intercession, his ever-living presence with his church. All this would be meaningless unless man is in a true sense the arbiter of his own destiny, and God is pleading before him to enter into life eternal. The terrible possibility of a hopeless fate gives pathos to the sorrowful tones of the Pleader's voice. It appears in his explicit declaration that the wicked go away into eternal punishment; that they are left at last in the outer darkness; that they are cast into the fire of Gehenna; that they lose their own soul; that they may sin a sin which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come. It reappears in reiterated type and metaphor. They are guests

arriving too late for the marriage feast and are shut out and the feast goes on without them ; they are chaff to be burned with fire, useless fish to be cast away, fruitless trees to be hewn down and burned to ashes, bankrupts consigned to perpetual imprisonment, rebels slain before the throne of their king. So terrible is this death-doom that any maiming, though it were as the cutting off of the right hand and the plucking out of the right eye, is to be preferred. If I turn to the Epistles, their language seems to me scarcely less explicit ; the wicked are without God, and therefore without hope : their sentence is death, their end destruction, their punishment everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. I am not unaware of the interpretations which Universalist scholars give to these and kindred words of awful warning. I could perhaps accept explanations of isolated verses. But I trust my readers will not understand me as impugning the honesty of other Biblical students when I say that I could not with honesty accept the authority of Christ's teaching for myself and still preach an "eternal hope." The possibility of incorrigible sin, the hopeless doom of the incorrigible sinner, appear to me to be as clearly taught by Christ as words can teach them.

But if the New Testament warnings may well awaken fear in every sinner lest his sin become incorrigible, its prophecies give to every Christian good ground of hope in a final, perfect redemption. They foretell a

kingdom of Christ to which all the kingdoms of this earth shall belong ; an hour when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess Jesus Christ to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father ; a reconciliation of all things unto the Redeemer, whether upon the earth or in the heavens ; a millennial glory, in which his kingdom will come and his will be done on earth as in heaven ; a new song unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever, sung by every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them. In the New Testament picture of this hour of triumph there is no shadow of scowling faces, of angered and unrepentant rebels ; in the New Testament echo of this song of the redeemed there is no interrupting of wail or wrath from any far-off prison-house of despair. After the last enemy is destroyed, shall sin, worst of all enemies, still live and work his ruin eternally ? When God hath put all enemies under Christ's feet, shall this worst of all enemies still rule in triumph over some remote, reserved corner of creation ? I cannot, will not, dogmatize ; but I can and do believe that God is always better than his promises, and that these promises of the perfect accord of all God's creatures in him and with him, mean not less but more than they seem to us to mean. I cannot, will not, dogmatize ; but I can hope. The more I study the Bible the more un-Scriptural seems to me the conception of endless sin ; the nearer I come

into fellowship with God my Father, my Saviour, my Comforter, the more intolerable grows the thought of it to me. And I thank God for the good hope in his Word which permits me to look forward to and hasten toward the day when this terrible tragedy of sin and pain will come to an everlasting end.

If one believes in the hopeless doom of incorrigible sin, and also in the undimmed glory of a perfected kingdom of love, he must believe in the annihilation of the incorrigibly wicked. Yes; that would be the logical conclusion. If logic were a glass which reveals the secrets of eternity, this would seem the final doom of unrepented sin. As it is, I can only characterize this as a probable doctrine, more probable by far than the doctrine of endless sin and suffering. There are phrases in Christ's teaching which give some color to that terrible dogma; but more often those quoted in support of it are misquoted or misinterpreted. Fire is generally, in the Bible, an emblem of destruction, not of torment. The chaff, the tares, the fruitless tree, are thrown into unquenchable fire, not to be tortured but to be destroyed. The hell fire of the New Testament is the fire of Gehenna, kept burning outside the walls of Jerusalem to destroy the offal of the city: here was the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched; emblems of destruction, not of torment. Except two, or at most three, passages in the Gospels, and a few enigmatical symbols in that most enigmatical book, the Revelation of St. John, there is

nothing in the New Testament to warrant the terrible opinion that God sustains the life of his creatures throughout eternity only that they may continue in sin and misery. That immortality is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ; that man is mortal and must put on immortality; that only he can put it on who becomes through Christ a partaker of the divine nature, and so an inheritor of him "who only hath immortality;" that eternal life is life eternal, and eternal death is death eternal, and everlasting destruction is destruction without remedy or hope of restoration—this is the most natural, as it is the simplest reading of the New Testament.

And still I do not dogmatize; I wait, and fear, and hope, and trust. I am not curious to know the mystic blessing in eternal life; I would not if I could comprehend the awful mystery of eternal death. I am more than content, as a little child, to leave the eternal future with my heavenly Father; meanwhile warning every man to beware of his delusive hope which suffers him to postpone repentance till to-morrow, and refusing to burden myself with the intolerable horror of a kingdom of darkness, and night, and sin, as eternal as the kingdom of God and of his Christ.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ETERNAL LIFE.

SOMETIMES, in the privacy of my study," writes Rousseau, "with my hands pressed tight over my eyes, or in the darkness of the night, I am of his opinion [that there is no God]. But look yonder [at this he pointed to the sky with head erect and an inspired glow]; the rising sun, as it scatters the mists that cover the earth and lays bare the wondrous glittering scene of nature, disperses at the same moment all clouds from my soul. I find my faith again, and my God; and my belief in him. I admire and adore him and prostrate myself in his presence." On which Mr. Morley, in his biography, comments as follows: "As if that settled the question affirmatively, any more than the absence of such theistic emotion in many noble spirits settles it negatively." This comment of Morley's seems to me a little like that of the culprit who finding himself faced by two witnesses who swore that they saw him steal the shoes found in his possession, assured the judge that he could bring twenty witnesses who would swear that they did not see him steal them. An affirma-

tive testimony by one witness that he perceived a fact cannot be outweighed by the negative testimony of a hundred that they did not perceive it. A thousand dullards who see nothing to admire in a sonata of Beethoven cannot counterbalance the experience of one musical soul who is entranced by it.

This is fundamental to all that I have had to say in this little volume. A mystical psychology underlies it: the doctrine that man possesses a spiritual perception, a sixth sense, by which he immediately and directly perceives the invisible world in which he lives, and to which by many ties he is indissolubly bound; by which alone he perceives the truths of beauty in nature and in art, the truths of goodness in character and life, the moral beauty in men or books, in deeds or ideals; by which also he sees and knows God. This is no "theistic emotion," it is a direct spiritual perception; and its exercise is by no means confined to saints. It is a universal faculty, in some men deadened, in others marvellously quickened and developed, in none absolutely wanting. Some spiritual idiots there may be; but not more in number than the intellectual idiots, nor so numerous as esthetic idiots. The spiritual sense is as universal as the capacity for reason, and more common than the capacity for elevated taste. I have endeavored to show that to deny this faculty to man is to deny all basis for faith, not merely in God, but in goodness, in immortality, and in the soul of man; that on

the recognition of this capacity of spiritual discernment is built all political integrity, all commercial honor, all domestic love, as well as every Christian belief. Interrogating this spiritual consciousness for its testimony as to spiritual phenomena, I have interpreted its answers to some perplexing questions presented by current thought: God is the infinite Power and the universal Presence. Christ is the manifestation and disclosure of this Eternal and Invisible Energy in a human life; and so a manifestation and disclosure of his personality, which, but for such a disclosure, must have remained forever, as Herbert Spencer declares it, an unknown quality. This living Presence, makes itself known to us as to Dinah Morris, as to Rousseau, by unspeakable manifestations to us in our higher and better moments. This divine Person entering in us, takes from us, if we are but willing to part with them, our sins, remitting not always the punishment, but the transgression, and perfecting in us his own likeness; this he does by the impartation of himself through sympathy, that is suffering with us; this participation in the burden of another being the eternal condition of helping that other to bear it. The Bible read spiritually is perceived to be a book of promise and life, read spiritually is discerned as its fulfilment, and we accept the words of this one because we are living in the enjoyment of the other. In brief, I have endeavored to read the doctrines of God, of Christ, of

the Holy Spirit, of the Atonement, of Justification, as spiritual experiences rather than as dogmatic beliefs, and give them a spiritual rather than an intellectual or philosophical interpretation. In the two chapters on the Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Death, I have endeavored, still following the general method, to show that a spiritual discernment of Scripture relieves the Christian creed of two burdens, one an intellectual, the other a moral one; burdens which do not belong to it and which it ought not to bear.

But this is not all. There is one other and last word to be said, and one which it equally oppresses him who believes it, to utter or to leave unuttered. How can he explain clearly that which he only sees through a glass darkly?

God possesses the power of directly communicating himself to the soul of men, that is the theological truth. Man possesses the power of directly and immediately receiving the communicating Presence of God, that is the psychological truth. Only he truly and spiritually lives who in the exercise of this power lives in perpetual communion with God; that is the truth of spiritual experience. Such a life with and in God is called in Scripture Eternal Life. He who possesses it is called an heir of God; not because he inherits something from God, but because he inherits God himself.

Religion is the life of God in the soul of man. I

mean this not metaphorically, but absolutely and literally. He dwells in us; his life becomes the seed and secret of our life. In this indwelling is the secret of character. Character is not a product of heredity—it is not born of blood, nor of resolute purpose; it is not self-made, it is not born of the flesh, nor of law and teaching; it is not born of the will of man. True character is born of God. All voices of God, in nature, in history, in literature, in art, are avenues communicating it; but the one Word above all others, so supremely clear that all others are but broken voices by the side of it, is the Word made flesh, the Rabbi of Galilee, the Messiah of prophecy, the son of the carpenter, the Son of God, Christ Jesus. In all the long line of prophets coming to their consummation in John, in all pagan prophets pointing the world to the larger and fuller voice yet to speak, the perfect Word was never heard. They were but witnesses of the Word, in whom and through whom life is communicated from the heart of God to the heart of humanity.

This Life is the Light of the world. It is not too much to say that our Protestant theological systems have reversed this order; they have made the Light the life of men. Conviction of the truth they have made the precursor and producer of conversion of the life. A sound theology they have revered as the mother of a true religion. The creed is put at

the church porch, and by understanding it one enters into church life. But this is certainly not the Scriptural order, nor the philosophical order. In both, Life precedes Light; we are, and therefore we know. Flowers came before botany; home love and life before moral philosophy; the State before political philosophy; industry before political economy; religion before theology. Theology is the science of the divine life; but one cannot have a science of phenomena before the phenomena exist. In the history of the church, church life preceded church creeds. It was several centuries before the earliest and simplest grew into form. In the history of the individual, Christian life ought always to precede Christian creed—always will and must if the creed be a real and living faith. A child loves the mother long before he studies theories of parental authority and filial obligation, and the soul loves God long before it can comprehend either his nature or its own relation to him. No rules will make an artist of one who has not art life in his soul, nor an orator of one who has no vital power in himself to communicate to others. They will only make a copyist of the one and a rhetorician of the other. And a creed that is imposed on the soul will only make a Pharisee, not a Christian. The creed must grow out of the life. Nay more than that; in vain the Light comes to the soul if the soul has no Life. It shines there in utter darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not;

it comes to its own, and its own receives it not. Without an eye, what use is light? without an ear, what use is music? without life in the soul, what use is truth? The life answers to the truth as the seed in the ground to the spring invitation; and if there be no seed, the spring invites in vain, and the desert remains a desert in all seasons.

This truth, that God is in us and we in God, through the direct, immediate, personal, vital contact of the divine spirit with our spirits is repeated again and again in the Bible, with absolute unchangeableness of doctrine and endless variance of metaphor. Christ is a garment, we are to wear Him; Christ is a road, we are to walk in Him; Christ is a vine, we are to be grafted on Him; Christ is a house, we are to live in Him; we are a temple, Christ is to live in us; Christ is bread and wine, we are to eat Him; Christ is a husband, we are to be married to him, and go to housekeeping, living under one roof, living one life, becoming one flesh. Or if we turn from metaphor we shall find plain and simple declarations of the truth, a truth so profound that no philosophical form of expression can ever suffice to utter it. I quote but one out of many of Christ's own words: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; [that is, it has no sensible demonstration of his

presence, and no spiritual experience of him. Like Mr. Morley's "noble spirits," it has "no such theistic emotion." ] "But ye know him [but do not see him any more than the world does ;] for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you."<sup>1</sup>

It is very certain that in the conception of the New Testament writers that eternal life which Paul declares to be the life of God, is not something future. It extends into the future; and like all life it is ever developing and increasing; for when life ceases to grow it begins to decay. But it is a present experience. "He that drinketh my blood," says Christ, "hath eternal life;" "the gift of God is life eternal," says Paul; "ye have eternal life," says John. The New Testament puts life in the present tense. It is this life of oneness with God; life in Him, life drawn from Him. Eternal life is to live in Him; to be filled with His fulness; to have a companionship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; to walk with Him, to be transformed into His image.

This is the secret and source of that divine consolation in and victory over sorrow which the Bible promises to the believer. Many a student reading the ninety-first Psalm intellectually has been puzzled by its promises. "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness,

<sup>1</sup> Compare John xxii. 3; Ephes. iii. 17-19.

nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." "How is this," cries the rationalistic critic; "do not the saints sicken and die? Is piety a protector from cholera? Does the devout man never need vaccination in time of small-pox?" Aye! the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day, enter the homes of the godly as of the ungodly; and yet it is literally true, literally if one will read both the promises and the fulfillment with his spiritual perception, that they do not come nigh him who has made the Lord his habitation. Men are hurt only where their life is; and calamity is no calamity if it does not touch a vital interest. Philip Gilbert Hamerton tells the following story: "Not long after the Indian mutiny, I was in a railway carriage, when a comfortable-looking gentleman expressed the hope that the evil deeds of the rebels had been exaggerated. A silent man in the corner of the carriage here interfered: "They tied me to a tree; they killed my wife, my faithful servants, and my children before my eyes." Then he relapsed into silence. The comfortable-looking gentleman, by way of being consolatory, replied, "Oh, you're young yet: you'll marry again, very likely, and have another family." Now it is safe to say that in this case the comfortable-looking gentleman, if he had been in the silent man's place, would have felt

but very slightly the silent man's anguish. He did not live in the domestic affections, and could not be seriously hurt therein. A man may live so low a life, that a shame which would kill a more noble nature will not cost him an hour's sleep or a temporary loss of appetite. In like manner a man may live so high a life that troubles which infest and torment his less ennobled neighbor will not come nigh him. General Armstrong, the unsung hero of Hampton Institute, will sit at the table, so absorbed in the conversation, and in the cause to which he has consecrated himself and in which he lives, that he does not know what is set before him, and eats it in entire unconsciousness whether it is well-cooked or ill-cooked; indeed he would scarcely know if it were not cooked at all. And a burnt beefsteak or muddy coffee which would spoil the breakfast for a less absorbed enthusiast, comes not nigh him. So it is possible to so live in the spiritual world, so to make the Most High one's refuge, so to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, that the troubles which infest the life of those whose life is in earthly circumstance and relation, almost literally come not nigh the God-sheltered spirit. He is stricken but feels it not, wounded but is oblivious. Like the wounded boy who brought his message to Napoleon and then fell dead at his feet, he is borne up by a divine enthusiasm which makes him oblivious and impervious even to death wounds. In the midst of the howling

mob clamoring with angry voices and clenched fists for the blood of their victim, Christ stood unmoved as the sunlit mountain top by the storm which beats upon its base. The execrations of the mob, and later, the anguish of the cross truly came not nigh him. I despair of making the mere rationalist comprehend my meaning; but the spiritual sense will see more than I can express.

This life of God in the soul of men, as it is the armor against sorrow, so is it the deliverance from temptation. We are most of us, alas! content to live in a sphere and plane of life where the wild beasts are, and fight them there; sometimes winning success, sometimes suffering defeat. This is the human way of resisting temptation; it is not the divine way. That is to lift the soul up into a divine life, where the temptation ceases to be a temptation, and the once attractive sin becomes no allurement. "They that wait on the Lord," says Isaiah, "shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." We are beginning to get a glimmering idea of this method, and to act a little, a very little, upon it. The Children's Aid Society takes a boy out of the streets of New York city and sends him off into the country, into another atmosphere, into other fellowships, into another life. The boy might have been left in the streets, taught in a mission school, and battled his way along with sin and temptation, now rising, now falling; but in the new life his whole moral tissue is

changed, and after twenty years of Christian education he becomes an honest citizen, to whom the sensual attractions of the great metropolis would present no attractions. He is a new man; old things have passed away, all things have become new. It is safe for me to assume that the readers of this book do not keep themselves virtuous by a perpetual struggle to obey the statutes of the State, or even the Ten Commandments. They live a higher life, which has also its temptations, of a subtler kind; but not temptations to open vice or flagrant crime. Now it is feasible to so live in God that the battles which most of us have now to fight would not come near us. This I suppose is what Paul means when he writes to the Colossians, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ;" and to the Romans, "Reckon ye yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The nineteenth century is, thanks to the Gospel, dead to some sins to which the sixteenth was very much alive; and children educated in Christian households are often dead to sins to which less fortunate children, brought up on the street, are very much alive. And these experiences only point as prophets to the higher expériences of such a living, with and in God, that all temptations that beckon away from him are as phantoms which the soul regards not.

This then is Eternal Life; a life rooted and grounded and built up in God; a life in and with and by Him;

a life so hid with God in Christ that sorrows come not nigh to destroy him who dwells therein, and tears do but wash the eyes that they may see the clearer ; a life so full of God that the soul is dead to sin. To this life Paul refers when he says that " God hath made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ; " to this life John refers when he says " Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." This is the consummation of Christian experience, the last fruitage of faith. Faith begins by perceiving in Nature an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed ; it learns to see this energy in all phenomena both of matter and of life, and to know it as the universal Presence ; it begins to believe that this Power, not ourselves, makes for righteousness ; it discovers special signs of its goodness and truth in the Book of Promise, manifestations of its Personality in Jesus Christ, experiences of its love in the remission of sins, the secret of its spiritual power in the eternal law of self-sacrifice for love's sake ; and finally faith comes into personal and perpetual contact with this spirit of holiness and truth, no longer standing in the Presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, but dwelling with and transformed into the likeness of an Infinite and Eternal Goodness and Love by One whose Energy is as Infinite and Eternal in the spiritual world as in the phenomena of the material universe.

And this is Eternal Life.

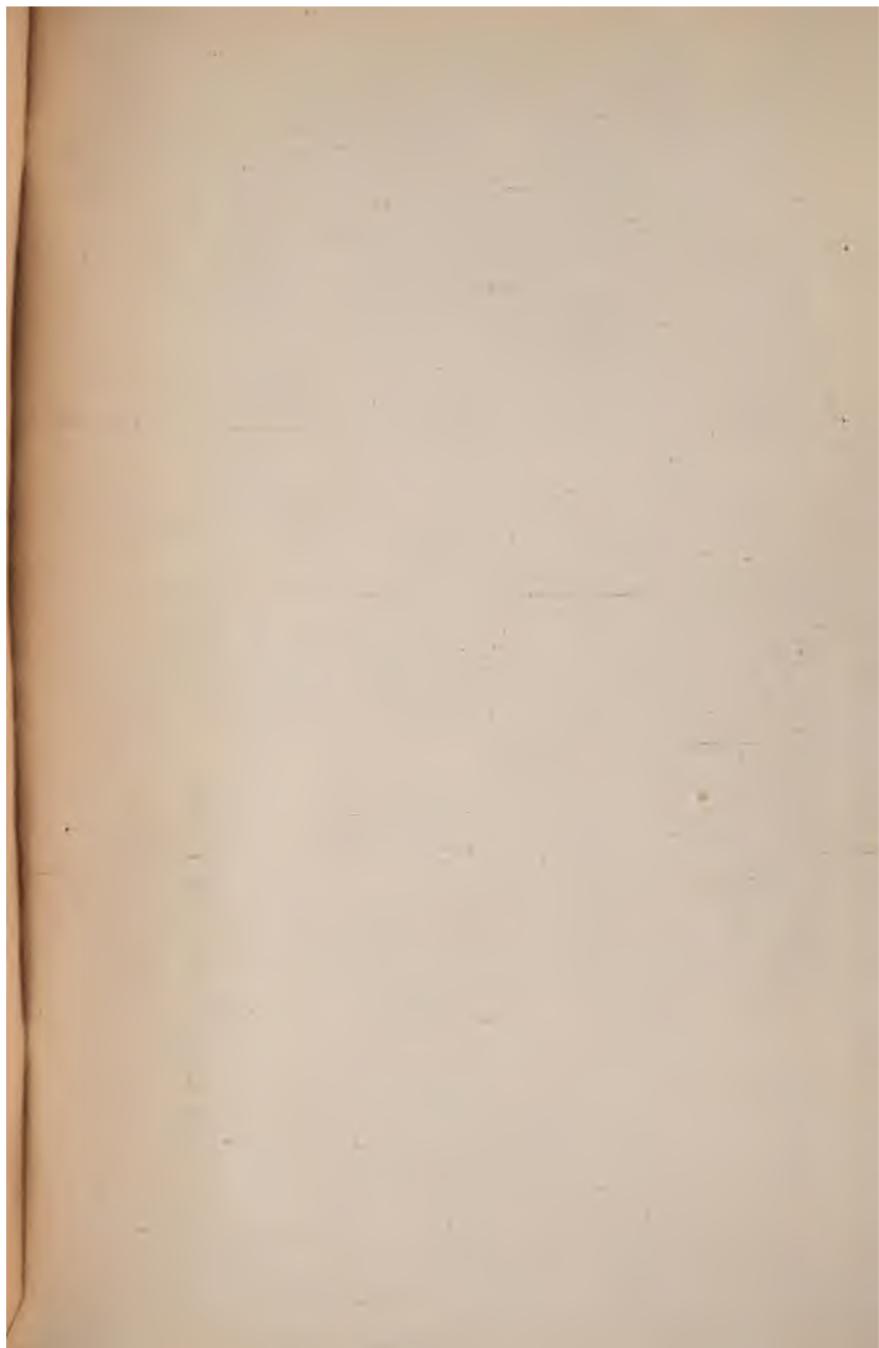
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